



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ADMINISTRATION CENTER
25 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE - OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95965
TELEPHONE: (530) 538-7371

BILL CONNELLY
First District

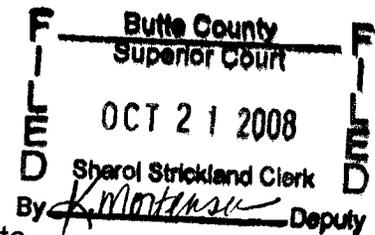
JANE DOLAN
Second District
MAUREEN KIRK
Third District

CURT JOSIASSEN
Fourth District

KIM K. YAMAGUCHI
Fifth District

September 9, 2008

Honorable Steven J. Howell, Presiding Judge
Butte County Superior Court
One Court Street
Oroville, CA 95965



Re: Responses of Butte County Board of Supervisors to
2007-2008 Butte County Grand Jury Final Report

Dear Judge Howell:

The Butte County Board of Supervisors expresses its thanks to the members of the Grand Jury for the many hours spent in researching, investigating and making valuable recommendations for improvement in government operations that benefit the citizens and taxpayers of Butte County.

In accordance with Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, the Board hereby submits the following public agency responses to the Findings and Recommendations of the 2007-2008 Butte County Grand Jury Final Report pertaining to matters under the Board's control.

The Board's responses below are organized by major heading in the order located in the 2007-2008 Grand Jury Final Report. For convenience, the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations are italicized and the County's responses are not. In preparing a public agency response, appointed department heads were requested to submit responses to the Chief Administrative Officer for inclusion in the comprehensive public agency response to be provided by the Board.

Additionally, the Board hereby submits responses pertaining to budgetary or personnel matters of a county department that is administered by an elected official. In such cases, the Board's responses address only budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision-making authority.

For your further information, the response prepared by each affected public agency is enclosed as part of Appendix "A".

**DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES
(CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT)**

Grand Jury Findings

1. Contracted support services such as counseling and parent support groups are reportedly not available to non-English speaking parents. When needed, an interpreter can be hired, but funds for that are limited. Counseling for non-English speaking children is available through Behavioral Health.

The respondent disagrees with the finding. Both counseling and parent support groups are available to non-English speaking parents, primarily in Spanish and Hmong. The department has the capability to enter into individual contracts to address the needs of non-English speaking parents that cannot be addressed within existing contracts.

In addition, the department has a well-defined policy for staff to access in-house interpreters as well as our contracted Language Line Interpreter Service. The department will provide refresher training to staff regarding existing departmental policy for accessing interpreter services, as well as the process for requesting services not covered through existing contracts, no later than November 30, 2008.

2. Despite the efforts made for effective communication in Butte County Children's Services (BCCS), there is some sense of disconnect between North County Children's Services (NCCS) and South County Children's Services (SCCS). Communication and consistency are hindered by program division and geographic distance. Notification of court policy changes have sometimes not been communicated to NCCS in a timely manner.

The respondent agrees with the finding. BCCS has begun analyzing its communication practice and gaps between the two office locations. Plans are in place to redesign the management assignments with the goal of providing consistent information and support to the staff regardless of their work location. Full implementation is expected by October 2008.

3. Staff report that NCCS is in need of more access to attorney services.

The respondent disagrees with the finding. Attorney services are readily available to both SCCS and NCCS. NCCS staff needs training regarding the various established processes to access attorney services available to them. This training will be provided to staff during unit meetings no later than November 30, 2008.

4. *Clerical Support to Children's Services is sometimes complicated by a multi-program chain of command.*

The respondent agrees with the finding. Support staff is now included in Children's Management meetings so they are available to discuss how best to provide clerical support to social work staff when changes in work processes and/or regulations are implemented. These meetings provide an ongoing opportunity for Clerical Support staff to make suggestions for improving business practices to support social work staff as well as improve efficiencies for clerical support staff.

5. *To promote cross training, DESS receptionists are rotated to various divisions including SCCS. In the case of SCCS, receptionist rotation is detrimental. SCCS is a busy reception area, the Children's Services program is complex, and the clients are often dealing with highly emotional issues.*

The respondent agrees with the finding. The issue of frequent rotation of reception staff in the SCCS has been addressed. There is agreement to assign staff to this function on a more long-term basis to ensure consistent service in both offices and for expertise to be developed in this position.

6. *NCCS needs better access to interview rooms to provide confidential places to meet with families and children.*

The respondent agrees with the finding. The NCCS does not have designated interview rooms for Children's Services staff to conduct confidential interviews. However, there are locations within the Chico Community Employment Center where these interviews can occur. Training will be provided to staff on how to access interview space within the building no later than November 30, 2008. The majority of confidential interviews are conducted off site, either in the families home or in an agreed upon location.

7. *In SCCS, there is a covered outdoor play area used for supervised visitation that is in need of a way to address oppressive heat in the summer months.*

The respondent agrees with the finding. The play area is surrounded by high walls that prohibit air flow causing the area to become quite warm in the summer months. BCCS has identified a funding source and is in the process of evaluating a safe and economical option to remedy this situation (e.g., fans, misters, etc.), with an anticipated implementation date of September 15, 2008.

8. *Social Workers spend over two thirds of their time in data entry and report work using the statewide Children's Welfare Service database (CWS). The amount of mandated information has increased dramatically in the last five years. This has made it difficult for Social Workers to keep up with their caseloads.*

The respondent agrees with the finding. Use of the Child Welfare Services Management System (CWS/CMS) is mandated by the State and is not a County option. The system enables counties to track prior history of families throughout the State as well as extract data that is used to monitor individual county performance and develop improvement plans for service delivery. Entering information into CWS/CMS has become more time-consuming over the past several years caused by the increasing complexity of the program and by outdated computer program design.

At this time the State of California is engaged in a process to redesign the existing system into a web based program with an anticipated date of 2011. This revised system will be much more user-friendly and efficient. Staff training is constantly being provided to both refresh staff on current procedures and identify new time saving methods for data entry and case management. U.C. Davis is developing case management training for social work staff to address this issue and Butte County has been the pilot county to receive this training at no cost.

9. Due to the lack of authorized funds for overtime pay unless it is an emergency, some employees are reportedly working overtime without pay in order to meet deadlines.

The respondent disagrees with the finding. A review of Social Work Supervisors indicates they are unaware of any staff that is working overtime without being compensated. The department will follow up to ensure this does not occur in the future.

10. Drug use in Butte County is a concern. Children's Services participates in the Methamphetamine Task Force and also partners with Drug Court. They also provide specialized training for foster parents of drug-addicted children. (OFR-Options for Recovery). However, the use of medical marijuana by parents conflicts with the Children's Service policy of a drug-free environment for children. There is abuse of "medical marijuana" prescriptions and it is often found to be one of many drugs in use. There is not a consistent policy in place to respond to this difficult dilemma.

The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. There is a consistent policy in place regarding any drug use that is based on the protection of children. However, any inconsistency in policy application and adherence to this policy will be monitored closely. Supervisors will review the policy with staff in unit meetings no later than November 30, 2008 and will monitor compliance through individual case reviews on an ongoing basis.

11. Although there are several drug rehabilitation programs in Butte County for women, there are limited options for men.

The respondent disagrees with the finding. There are programs in both North and South areas of the County. BCCS will provide training to all staff no later than November 30, 2008 to ensure they are aware of available resources and how to access

them for their male parents.

Grand Jury Recommendations

1. BCCS should encourage service providers to include non-English speaking families in their program plans.

The recommendation has been implemented. Contracted service providers are expected to provide services in a variety of languages, primarily Spanish and Hmong. When BCCS issues a request for proposal (RFP), the request includes the requirement that services be provided in a variety of languages as needed. Several of the service providers have individual staff that are bi-lingual and generally make those staff available when needed. The level of need for services in a variety of languages fluctuates and it is sometimes difficult for service providers to consistently have staff available to provide those services. When this occurs, BCCS has the ability to contract with individuals who can provide the needed service, or to provide interpreter services.

With regard to the process for accessing these bi-lingual services, it is not utilized as frequently, and, therefore, can be more cumbersome for social worker staff. BCCS will provide refresher training to staff on existing departmental policy no later than November 30, 2008, for accessing interpreter services as well as the process for requesting services not covered through existing service provide contracts.

2. DESS and BCCS should review communication practices and revise them to address the disconnect issues between NCCS and SCCS, the consistent and complete flow of communication, and general morale issues.

The recommendation has been partially implemented. DESS and BCCS have already begun analyzing its communication practices and gaps. Plans are in place to redesign the management assignments with the goal of providing consistent information and support to the staff regardless of their work location. Full implementation is expected by October 2008.

3. BCCS should review the need for additional attorney services to NCCS and ensure that need is met.

The recommendation to review the need for additional attorney services to NCCS has been implemented. The findings of the review indicate that there are sufficient attorney services to NCCS.

The current attorney has worked with supervisors and management to establish and communicate an effective process for accessing his services. The attorney has established a schedule of times he is available in each office when he is not in court. Currently, the attorney is in court approximately 22 hours per week and spends 7 hours in the office in Chico and 12 hours in the office in Oroville.

A system has been developed for social workers and supervisors to request a staffing when the attorney is not in the office. This system (which involves telephone and e-mail communication) appears to be working and the attorney has good response time when this process is used appropriately. Training will be provided to staff no later than November 30, 2008 regarding the established process to access attorney services.

4. DESS should consider ways to eliminate barriers in meeting BCCS clerical support needs and should consider the need for a permanent receptionist at SCCS.

The recommendation has been implemented. The issue of an experienced receptionist in the SCCS has been addressed and there is agreement to have a receptionist assigned on a more long-term basis in this area. Support staff is now included in Children's Management meetings so they are part of the team that evaluates better ways to do business for both clerical support and social work staff. This has eliminated many of the barriers. In addition, BCCS is currently engaged in a complete organizational review with all BCCS staff of how we do business and support staff is an active and important part of that process.

5. BCCS should find a way to provide adequate confidential interview space at NCCS.

The recommendation has been implemented. The availability of space in the Community Employment Center in Chico is an issue for all of the occupants of the building. There is finite space and the department has many activities that occur in this building. Every effort is made to afford all persons needing it a confidential interview space. Alternative outlying space has been considered, but it is not a reasonable option at this time. These needs will continue to be addressed within the processes and space currently available. Training will be provided to staff about how to request and access interview space within the building no later than November 30, 2008.

6. To offset budget reductions, BCCS should identify needs and find ways to partner with service organizations, businesses, civic groups, religious institutions and individuals in Butte County to help provide needed funding and volunteer services for programs and projects.

The recommendation has been implemented. BCCS is currently involved in a Community Alliance composed of community organizations committed to providing additional services for programs and clients. This group has met needs for families including activities for children and household items for families whose children are returning home.

The Children's Services Coordinating Council has developed a committee charged with identifying and coordinating funding and services that may be available to BCCS and our community partners for the future.

7. BCCS should develop a solution to the oppressive summer heat problem in the outdoor supervised visitation area in SCCS.

The recommendation has not been fully implemented. BCCS has identified a funding source and is in the process of evaluating a safe and economical resolution to this issue (e.g. fans, misters etc.). The expected date of completion of this project is September 15, 2008.

8. DESS and BCCS should explore ways to reduce the time demands placed on Social Workers from CWS data entry requirements and facilitate understanding of its process.

The recommendation will be partially implemented. Use of the Child Welfare Services Management System is mandated by the state and is not a County option. However, the County is exploring ways to streamline and expedite data entry through case management training.

The CWS/CMS computer system enables child welfare agencies to track prior history of families throughout the state as well as extract data that is used to monitor individual county performance and develop improvement plans for service delivery. Entering information into the CWS/CMS has become more time-consuming over the past several years due to the increasing complexity of the program as well as outdated computer program design. At this time the State of California is engaged in a process to modify the existing system with an estimated 2011 implementation date.

Staff are regularly updated regarding the importance of the information entered into the computer system and its usage for quality assurance in child welfare. Staff and supervisors meet regularly to identify and resolve individual issues with data entry and case management.

As a part of the current strategic planning process, BCCS is looking at any adjustments that can be made to increase efficiency in the use of the CWS/CMS system without additional staff. BCCS is coordinating with UC Davis to develop a time/caseload management training series specifically designed around the CWS workload issues, including the cumbersome data entry requirements.

9. BCCS should establish a consistent medical marijuana policy which is based on the protection of children.

This recommendation has been implemented. BCCS already has a consistent medical marijuana policy that is based on the protection of children.

Medical Marijuana is treated in the same manner as any drug/alcohol that is identified as an issue in a report made to us. Risk factors to a child are evaluated by BCCS. These factors include: drug/alcohol use, neglect issues, physical safety and protection issues. Once a child has been made a dependent of the Juvenile Court and placed in a

plan of reunification, BCCS monitors the effect of drug usage through the case plan. This means that regardless of the possession of a medical marijuana prescription, and assuming the use of drugs is prohibited in the court approved case plan, BCCS expects that the parent not use marijuana and look for alternative methods to deal with the underlying medical concern.

Supervisors will provide refresher training to staff on the established policy no later than November 30, 2008 and ensure adherence to the policy through individual case reviews on an ongoing basis.

10. BCCS should encourage the development of men's drug treatment options in the community.

The recommendation has been implemented. A drug treatment service geared for men is an area of need that the on which the community has been working for some time. DESS has been proactive in identifying the need for services among its child welfare families and encouraging the development of additional resources with our County and community partners who are funded for this activity.

Consequently, there are currently drug treatment services for men available through the Well Ministry and Salvation Army drug treatment services. These include residential and outpatient treatment. There are co-ed drug treatment services on an outpatient basis provided by Butte County Behavioral Health in both Chico and Oroville.

Butte County Behavioral Health will be providing Men's Health Groups located in the Butte County Employment Centers and will be available to clients in the CalWORKs and Children's Services programs. These groups will address substance abuse issues and other family issues.

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

Grand Jury Findings

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. The CDBG has provided money to improve the VMH by 2009 to meet ADA requirements.

The respondent agrees with this finding.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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 neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding. The Board of Supervisors understands that the department is making positive efforts to assist in insuring that accreditation can be achieved.

8. 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 that requested positions are

considered in the context of all staffing requirements in the budget.

9. 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 and adds that the Human Resources Department (HRD) provides training in Sexual Harassment Prevention, Positive Discipline (Parts 1 and 2), Partnering for Performance, EEO & Hostile Workplace, Managing Absenteeism, Oral Interview Skills for Managers, Grievance & MOU, Promotion & Transfer Tips, and Implementing Discipline. These trainings are offered several times per month each year in the months of November-June.

In addition to offering the set schedule of trainings conducted in the Human Resources Training Room, HRD conducts specialized trainings upon request of departments at locations of their choosing. In Fiscal Year 2007-2008, three employees of the General Services Department attended four different trainings offered by the HRD.

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

The respondent agrees with this finding.

Grand Jury Recommendations

1. 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.

2. 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. Budget constraints prevented the Facilities Alterations Request (FAR) recommendation from being approved for funding in the FY 2008-09 budget. However, options for resolving the access and privacy issues for the VSO will continue to be considered.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
(CITIZEN CONCERN RE DOE MILL ROAD, SKYWAY FROM INSKIP TO
HUMBOLDT ROAD, AND THE UPPER RIDGE EVACUATION PLAN)**

Grand Jury Findings

1. The North end of Doe Mill Road does not meet county standards for maintenance at this time.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

2. The Upper Skyway from Inskip to Humboldt Road at Butte Meadows will be paved starting in 2009, which will provide a connection to Highway 32 from Upper Skyway.

The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. The Department of Public Works (DPW) is currently working with the Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) on a project which will pave the road in question. Construction is planned for 2009; however, the project is currently underfunded, a situation that could delay project implementation.

3. There is a preliminary Upper Ridge Evacuation Plan, called Butte County Inter-Agency Emergency Action Plan, which includes the communities of Magalia, Paradise Pines, Lovelock, and Stirling City.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

Grand Jury Recommendation

1. The Butte County Department of Public Works and the Butte County Board of Supervisors should move forward expeditiously with the necessary steps, including coordination with related agencies and seeking citizen input, to adopt a final Upper Ridge Evacuation Plan.

The recommendation has been implemented. A plan has been developed, and given the nature of the plan, will continue to be updated and refined as conditions in the area evolve.

**TREASURER – TAX COLLECTOR
(FINDING AFFECTING BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATION)**

Grand Jury Recommendation

2. Administration and Board of Supervisors should seek resolution to space issues.

The recommendation, as written, requires further analysis and the respondent adds that the matter will be subject to budgetary constraints and fiscal feasibility analysis.

**BUTTE COUNTY JAIL
(BUTTE COUNTY SHERIFF AND JAIL IMPACT FEES)**

Grand Jury Recommendation

2. While the increase in the Jail Impact Fees approved by the Butte County BOS on July 10, 2007, is a major step forward, the Grand Jury wishes to take this opportunity to recommend that the incorporated towns and cities contribute to the shared, local need by collecting their own impact fees. These additional fees, collected within the incorporated areas, should insure prompt success in achieving AB 900 funding to help alleviate the substandard conditions for women inmates in our county.

The respondent agrees with the recommendation.

**PROBATION DEPARTMENT
(JUVENILE HALL)**

Grand Jury Findings

1. The Grand Jury found the method used to convey rules and policy information to wards inadequate. This info is critical to a successful detention experience in Juvenile Hall. A properly prepared rights and policies manual for individual distribution should be considered. This manual would pertain only to the wards and could be written at a grade level more comprehensible to them. The Grievance Procedure should be included in such a manual rather than posted or offered elsewhere.

The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. Every reasonable effort is being made to communicate necessary information to wards.

Each minor should be given a personal copy of the rules and policies that include the grievance process. To insure adequate communication, the current testing and review

process should continue.

2. The Grand Jury finds great potential in the development of transitioning programs such as the Boys and Girls Clubs' project at Juvenile Hall.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

Grand Jury Recommendation

1. A thoughtfully organized manual providing useful, pertinent and mandated information at a readable level should be constructed and used, in lieu of the current method of posting, to ensure that all wards have access to critical information during their detention. A Spanish edition should also be written at a proper comprehension level.

The recommendation will be implemented. Minors will have individual manuals and a Spanish edition will be made available. The postings are in the process of revision and will continue to be used as part of an orientation process occurring each morning with newly-arrived minors.

A committee of line staff and supervisors convened in late July 2008 to review orientation procedures, postings of rules, rule binders, and programming. Implementation has already begun following certain revisions of the various methods we use to convey rules and policies.

By October 1, 2008, all Grand Jury recommendations will be implemented.

CONCLUSION

The Board of Supervisors appreciates the time, commitment and diligence of each member of the Grand Jury in conducting research and analysis, attending meetings and interviews, and working to identify areas for improvement within government operations of our magnificent county.

Thank you for your courtesy and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Curt Josiassen', is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Curt Josiassen, Chair
Butte County Board of Supervisors

Enclosures



BUTTE COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT



42 County Center Drive
Oroville, California 95965-3377
(530) 538-7661
Fax: (530) 538-6826

JOHN M. WARDELL
Chief Probation Officer
E-Mail:
jwardell@buttecounty.net

STEVE ELLEN
Asst. Chief Probation Officer
E-Mail:
sellen@buttecounty.net

August 11, 2008

Findings

F1. The Grand Jury found the method used to convey rules and policy information to wards inadequate. This info is critical to a successful detention experience in Juvenile Hall. A properly prepared rights and policies manual for individual distribution should be considered. This manual would pertain only to the wards and could be written at a grade level more comprehensible to them. The Grievance Procedure should be included in such a manual rather than posted or offered elsewhere.

The respondent disagrees partially with the finding, since the wide-ranging term "inadequate" was used. While meeting the needs of minors detained in the Juvenile Hall there is always room for improvement. Successful detention experiences do occur with the varied methods use by Juvenile Hall staff to convey the rules. Historically, there has always been more than one method for the sharing of information with minors. For example, each minor is provided information concerning rules and policies through a personal review process during booking. Once assigned to a living unit an additional method of information is provided as each minor is required to complete an open-book written quiz. During this information sharing method minors are also encouraged to ask staff any questions they may have while going over the result of the minor's quiz with them. At this time, staff will also attempt to assess the minors understanding of the information they have been provided. Each minor has access to a binder in each of the living units for reference, and is encouraged by staff to ask questions concerning any rules a minor might question. The Grand Jury is correct in referencing the white boards in the living units as each board does hold a large number of sheets of paper containing rules and policies. The white board style bulletin boards should be designed better and made less confusing for minors. Additionally, each minor should be provided a personal copy of the rules and policies that also include the grievance process.

F2. The Grand Jury finds great potential in the development of transitioning programs such as the Boys and Girls Clubs' project at Juvenile Hall.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

Recommendations

R1 A thoughtfully organized manual providing useful, pertinent as well as mandated information at a readable level should be constructed and used, in lieu of the current method of posting, to ensure that all wards have access to critical information during their detention. A Spanish edition should also be written at a proper comprehension level.

The recommendation will be implemented. Minors will be given individual manuals, and a Spanish edition will be made available. The postings themselves are in the process of revision, and will continue to be used as part of an orientation process occurring each morning with newly-arrived minors. A committee of line staff and supervisors convened in late July to review orientation procedures, postings of rules, rule binders, and programming. Implementation has already begun following certain revisions of the various methods we use to convey rules and policies. By October 1, 2008 all Grand Jury recommendations will have been implemented.



John M. Wardell

Chief Probation Officer



BUTTE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

25 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 200
OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95965-3380
Telephone: (530) 538-7631 Fax: (530) 538-7120

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

BILL CONNELLY
JANE DOLAN
MAUREEN KIRK
CURT JOSIASSEN
KIM K. YAMAGUCHI

C. BRIAN HADDIX
Chief Administrative Officer

August 26, 2008

Honorable Steven J. Howell, Presiding Judge
Butte County Superior Court
1 Court Street
Oroville, CA 95965

RE: Grand Jury Response

Dear Honorable Judge Howell,

This letter is my response to the findings and recommendations contained in the 07-08 Grand Jury Final Report.

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

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 neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding, as the Chief Administrative Officer is not involved in the daily operations of the General Services Department and is not in a position to provide meaningful comment on this finding.

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 that requested positions are considered in the context of all staffing requirements in the budget.

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.

DOE MILL ROAD, SKYWAY FROM INSKIP TO HUMBOLDT ROAD AND THE UPPER RIDGE EVACUATION PLAN

Findings

F1. The North end of Doe Mill Road does not meet county standards for maintenance at this time.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F2. The Upper Skyway from Inskip to Humboldt Road at Butte Meadows will be paved starting in 2009, which will provide a connection to Highway 32 from Upper Skyway.

The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. The Department Of Public Works is currently working with the Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) on a project which will pave the road in question. Construction is planned for 2009; however, the project is currently underfunded, a situation that could delay project implementation.

F3. There is a preliminary Upper Ridge Evacuation Plan, called Butte County Inter-Agency Emergency Action Plan, which includes the communities of Magalia, Paradise Pines, Lovelock, and Stirling City.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

Recommendations

R1. The Butte County Department of Public Works and the Butte County Board of Supervisors should move forward expeditiously with the necessary steps, including coordination with related agencies and seeking citizen input, to adopt a final Upper Ridge Evacuation Plan.

The recommendation has been implemented. A plan has been developed, and given the nature of the plan, will continue to be updated and refined as conditions in the area evolve.

TREASURER TAX COLLECTOR

Findings

F1. The Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office is efficient and well run

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F2. Morale was reported to be high by staff in all departments

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F3. Staff members reported respecting management and, in turn, they too were respected.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F4. Office space is limited and could become a stressful issue. It also compromises confidentiality.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F5. The department has some one screen computers per desk for employees and lacks a counting/counterfeit machine for desk top work.

The respondent partially agrees with the finding. Most workstations function well with one computer per monitor. There is a counting/counterfeit machine for the front counter.

F6. There is no conference room for staff or conference meetings.
The respondent agrees with the finding.

Recommendations

R1. There are no recommendations regarding management and staff.
The recommendation requires no response.

R2. Administration and Board of Supervisors should seek resolution to space issues.
The recommendation requires additional analysis. The existing facilities master plan is being updated, which will balance facilities needs with available funding.

R3. The staff is in need of a conference room.
The recommendation requires additional analysis. The existing facilities master plan is being updated, which will balance facilities needs with available funding.

R4. The department would benefit from two screened computers for employees.
The recommendation will not be implemented in its entirety because it is not feasible. Some desks have been given two monitors where the need warrants the additional expense.

R5. Acquire portable counting/counterfeit identification machine.
The recommendation has been implemented. The department has a portable counterfeit detecting device at the front counter in the Tax Division, and a second device is in the Central Collections Division. The Treasury Division uses a counting/counterfeit detecting machine located at the back of the office.

R6. Consider confidentiality for customers in designing future office expansions.
The recommendation has been implemented.

BUTTE COUNTY JAIL (BUTTE COUNTY SHERIFF AND JAIL IMPACT FEES)

Recommendation

R2. While the increase in the Jail Impact Fees approved by the Butte County BOS on July 10, 2007, is a major step forward, the Grand Jury wishes to take this opportunity to recommend that the incorporated towns and cities contribute to the shared, local need by collecting their own impact fees. These additional fees, collected within the incorporated areas, should insure prompt success in achieving AB 900 funding to help alleviate the substandard conditions for women inmates in our county.

The respondent agrees with the recommendation.

Sincerely,



C. Brian Haddix
Chief Administrative Officer

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT



TO: THE HONORABLE JUDGE JAMES REILLEY, PRESIDING JUDGE, BUTTE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

FROM: J. MICHAEL CRUMP, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS *JMC*

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT FOR FY2007/08

DATE: August 28, 2008

I respectfully submit the following comments on the 2007/08 Butte County Grand Jury Report:

FINDINGS
DOE MILL ROAD, SKYWAY FROM INSKIP TO HUMBOLDT ROAD AND
THE UPPER RIDGE EVACUATION PLAN

Grand Jury Findings

1. *The North end of Doe Mill Road does not meet county standards for maintenance at this time.*

The respondent agrees with the finding.

2. *The Upper Skyway from Inskip to Humboldt Road at Butte Meadows will be paved starting in 2009, which will provide a connection to Highway 32 from Upper Skyway.*

The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. The Department is currently working with Butte County Association of Governments on a project which will pave the road in question. Construction is planned for 2009; however, the project is currently underfunded, a situation that could delay project implementation.

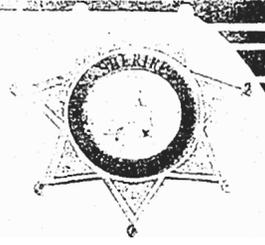
3. *There is a preliminary Upper Ridge Evacuation Plan, called Butte County Inter-Agency Emergency Action Plan, which includes the communities of Magalia, Paradise Pines, Lovelock, and Stirling City.*

The respondent agrees with the finding.

Grand Jury Recommendations

The Butte County Department of Public Works and the Butte County Board of Supervisors should move forward expeditiously with the necessary steps, including coordination with related agencies and seeking citizen input, to adopt a final Upper Ridge Evacuation Plan.

The recommendation has not yet been fully implemented, but is in process. It should be noted that the Department of Public Works is not the lead agency responsible for the Upper Ridge Evacuation Plan. We are a stakeholder and active participate in the process and will continue to work with Cal-Fire, the Sherriff's Department, County Office of emergency Services, as well as other agencies to implement this recommendation.



July 16, 2008

The Honorable James Reilly, Presiding Judge
Butte County Superior Court
One Court Street
Oroville Ca 95965

RE: RESPONSE TO 2007-2008 GRAND JURY REPORT

Dear Judge Reilly:

I begin this response to the observations of the 2007-2008 Grand Jury, with appreciation for the positive comments about the operations of this office they made in their report. We are grateful that, with the huge volume of work facing them and the compacted time frame available, they noticed and spoke of the laudable performance of so many of our employees. Thank you.

FINDING - F1: "While the functioning of the evidence building has been brought up to standards in the Grand Jury's opinion, one concern remains – evidence, stored as biological materials in the building's huge freezers, is at risk of being compromised should the freezers fail."

RESPONSE TO F1: We agree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION - R1: "An automatic alarm system should be installed and activated to report, perhaps at Central Control, a failure of the large freezers in the Evidence Building. This is especially important during the summer months, and would allow duty personnel to respond in a timely manner to system failures in order to preserve biological materials stored there."

RESPONSE TO R1: The recommendation requires further analysis in part. During normal business hours, the Evidence Facility has an Evidence Technician in place, the majority of the time, who's duties include being aware of the status of the freezers and refrigerators that contain evidence (6). Outside of these hours is when the concern arises.

It is noted that there was an electrical failure to a freezer several years ago, and fortunately we were able to establish that no viable evidence was lost due to that failure.

Over the past three years we have purchased new equipment that is now in place; all first-rate and of substantial, commercial quality. We have not experienced any failures with this to date. In a further effort to reduce any fire hazard, Facilities Services has done virtually an entire re-wiring of

the Evidence Facility. Also, the building is now adequately insulated and air conditioned, greatly reducing the possible overheating of the equipment.

Another of the considerations in this matter has been the expense involved in implementing an effective and reliable alarm system. We have explored this in the past, and will do so again in response to this recommendation; however, as we have been assured recently, one of the highest priority construction projects for the county is a new Evidence Facility. The county is understandably reluctant to invest too heavily in an outmoded structure destined soon (2009?) to be replaced.

FINDING - F2: "The Women's section of the "old jail" still does not meet the definition of an adequate humane environment even though staff has done everything reasonable to make it so. The solution lies in acquiring funds for a 25% match to a portion of the 4.1 billion dollars being made available in Assembly Bill 900 for the construction of new local jail space."

RESPONSE TO F2: We agree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION - R2: "While the increase in the Jail Impact Fees approved by the Butte County BOS on July 10, 2007, is a major step forward, the Grand Jury wishes to take this opportunity to recommend that the incorporated towns and cities contribute to this shared, local need by collecting their own impact fees. These additional fees, collected within the incorporated areas, should insure prompt success in achieving AB900 funding to help alleviate the substandard conditions for women inmates in our county."

RESPONSE TO R2: This recommendation requires further analysis, in so far as this office is not able, aside from voicing support for the recommendation, to influence the decision of the independent political entities involved.

It must be noted that AB900 (\$1.2 BILLION) established a complex, phased process for the allocation of construction funding, involving a number of State and local governmental agencies, with a variety of stipulations and requirements that dictate what hoops must be jumped through to be considered for "the prize", who gets what, how much, and when. Butte County was not successful in our first attempt to secure funding through this legislation; however, there is hope that a future effort may prevail.

FINDING - F3: "The staffing level of Central Control has been a concern as far back as the 1998 – 1999 Grand Jury report which read "the inmate monitoring station is understaffed. One officer should not be expected to adequately observe the activities of the many inmates." In response a request was made in that year's budget presentation to the BOS. The Grand Jury observed one officer still assigned to observe 2 large monitors containing a total of 25 (16+9) smaller screens. Added to this was the responsibility for answering a nearby phone where, according to jail staff, about 85% of the incoming calls to the facility are received."

RESPONSE TO F3: We partially disagree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION – R3: "At the least video monitoring and phone answering responsibilities should be divided among two persons, rather than one, for the safety and security of both staff and

inmates. Daytime operations are busiest at the jail and should get first consideration for extra assistance.”

RESPONSE TO R3: We agree that there is a workload issue at Central Control, but we believe the assignment is overtaxed with responsibility as opposed to being understaffed. This seemingly fine distinction is made because we believe that technological renovation and redistribution of assigned tasks can resolve the current situation without an increase in staff. To this end, we are redesigning the office to improve its “ergonomic viability”. We have installed a telephone tree to provide a variety of information about inmates (our most common phone queries – housing, bail, visiting, mail, alternative sentencing programs) and we are working with our telephone service provider to add an electronic answering system that will interface with our jail management software to provide information about charges, housing locations, future court dates, etc. Furthermore, we are in the process of significantly upgrading all of the electronic control equipment in the jail, including cameras and monitors.

We are very mindful of the significant staffing needs that this Office faces. We are also the shepherd of our resources, financial assets included. We would never intentionally expose any employee to an unreasonable risk or unsafe environment, but sometimes the addition of personnel to an area is not the most viable corrective action to employ.

FINDING - F4: “The length, readability, and complexity of the Jail Information Handbook provide significant difficulties in comprehension, and therefore usability, by many inmates. Grievances are sometimes denied because “you have failed to comply with Section II, Procedure 04 (located on page 15) of the Jail Information Handbook, in that you have not referenced what constitutional right, state or federal law, Board of Corrections – Title 15 section number, or Departmental policy or rule that has been violated. No further action will be taken on this grievance as you have exhausted your administrative remedy.”

RESPONSE TO F4: **We partially disagree with this finding.**

RECOMMENDATION – R4: “If inmates must reference alleged violations in grievances to a specific “constitutional right, state or federal law, Board of Corrections – Title 15 section number, or Department policy or rule,” assistance should be provided by an intermediary because of the general inability for many inmates to comprehend such a vast array of legal material. Legal Services of Northern California or the Community Legal Information Center at CSU Chico, for example, might be queried as to availability of such intervention services. Denying grievances on the aforementioned basis raises questions of unfairness. Additionally, the Jail Information Handbook is capable of being simplified and shortened to avoid this perception by ensuring an adequate comprehension level and increased usability in the hands of most inmates. County resources available for accomplishing such a task might be found among the Butte County Office of Education or the District Attorney’s office. A Spanish version, as is the current practice, should continue to be made available”.

RESPONSE TO R4: The current inmate grievance process, including the entire Jail Information Handbook, are examples of documents, living documents if you will, that have evolved into their present form over a number of years. This process was not an attempt to preclude “fairness”, but to generalize a process and to be all inclusive, thus safeguarding the rights of the entirety of the

inmate population. Two of the compelling factors that have influenced this metamorphosis are the vexatious litigiousness of some inmates, and our desire to secure approval for significant change through class attorneys representing the inmates and their rights. While these may be viewed by some as unfortunate, they are factors of the reality with which a correctional facility must contend. These and other elements have created the precise, and admittedly difficult but legally approved, language of the documents.

The vast majority of inmate questions, complaints or grievances are informally resolved through the daily interaction with jail staff. If an inmate is dissatisfied with the outcome of this opportunity and desires to process a formal grievance, they are assisted by the staff and student interns from the Community Legal Information Center from CSUC, or CLIC.

We are also currently developing a video presentation that will be used during the orientation of inmates at intake, which will include the information from the Jail Handbook and will be available in both English and Spanish.

FINDING – F5: “Deaths in custody might better be prevented if a comprehensible and enforceable policy were in place that required reporting to the Jail Commander when self-threats occur during, for example, preliminary and other judicial hearings while in custody, interrogations/questioning by law enforcement and related agencies prior to as well as during custody, and interviews/consultations by attorneys such as public defenders that also take place during custody. Such a policy might be modeled after the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law first passed in 1963 by the California Attorney General’s Office. Originally only physicians were included in this law but later a very comprehensive list of mandated reporters emerged as well as serious penalties for failures to report.”

RESPONSE TO F5: We partially disagree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION - R5: “The Butte County Sheriff, or designee, should consider how a comprehensive policy of notification to jail personnel, when self-threats are made by detainees outside of the jail facility or environment, might effectively be implemented and enforced to help preserve and enhance the excellent safety record of the BCSO Corrections Division”.

RESPONSE TO R5: There are few issues indeed, which are as important to our personnel as their safety and security or that of those entrusted to our care. We train on the various aspects of this issue on a continual basis. We are proactive in seeking further information or guidance as differing theories or concepts evolve dealing with the symptomology of those at risk. This applies to many other members of this office, not just those assigned to the Corrections division, as we know that self destructive ideation and acting out occurs during different phases of our public contacts. The recent incidents evaluated by the Grand Jury have definitely increased the awareness of this problem amongst all the areas of the criminal justice system. We have received an increased number of expressions of concern from the court staff, attorneys and family members about comments made or behavioral changes witnessed in contacts with family members. As has always been the case, our best source of information in this area is the family.

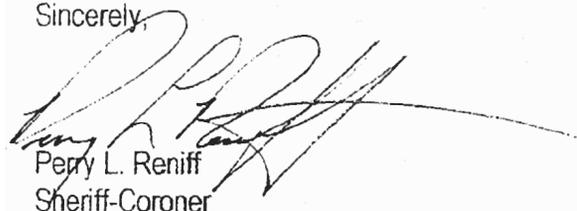
Whether this aspect of the human condition, recognizing that the fact of incarceration is sometimes the catalyst for the acting out, is effectively addressed through the legislative process, is arguable

at best. There are so many factors to consider in determining whether to criminalize the failure to recognize what might be a subtle shift in behavior, for example, that perhaps the mental health community is better suited for establishing the dialogue and determining the best venue to pursue this issue.

This office will assist in whatever reasonable fashion is presented, and we will continue to address the problem systemically as we have done in the past.

We are also in the process of preparing topical information for distribution among our allied law enforcement agencies that we hope will prove beneficial in this area.

Sincerely,



Perry L. Reniff
Sheriff-Coroner

cc: Board of Supervisors
Bill Connelly
Jane Dolan
Curt Josiassen
Maureen Kirk
Kim Yamaguchi
Brian Haddix, Butte County CAO



Butte County

LAND OF NATURAL WEALTH AND BEAUTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

County Administration Building
25 County Center Drive
Oroville, California 95965-3387
Tel: (530) 538-7651 - Fax: (530) 538-7790
TTY (TDD): (530) 538-6833
Recruitment Hotline: (530) 538-7653

July 25, 2008

Honorable James Reilley, Presiding Judge
Butte County Superior Court
One Court Street
Oroville, CA 95965

Rc: Response to the FY 2007-2008 Grand Jury Final Report

Dear Judge Reilley:

In accordance with Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.5, the Interim Director-Human Resources submits the following response to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury's Final Report for FY 2007-2008 pertaining to the Department of Human Resources:

THE BUTTE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

Grand Jury Finding

F9 There were some indications 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. The Human Resources Department provides training in Sexual Harassment Prevention, Positive Discipline (Parts 1 and 2), Partnering for Performance, EEO & Hostile Workplace, Managing Absenteeism, Oral Interview Skills for Managers, Grievance & MOU, Promotion & Transfer Tips, Implementing Discipline. These trainings are offered several times per month each year in the months of November-June. In addition to offering the set schedule of trainings conducted in the Human Resources Training Room, the Human Resources Department also conducts specialized trainings upon request of Departments at locations of their choosing.

This concludes the response of the Interim Director-Human Resources to the area in the Grand Jury Report for fiscal year 2007-2008 where they mentioned the Human Resources Department.

Sincerely,

Laura A. Brunson
Interim Director-Human Resources

cc: C. Brian Haddix, CAO

COUNTY OF BUTTE

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES



CATHI GRAMS

Director and Public Guardian/Public Administrator

P.O. Box 1649, Oroville, CA 95965

PHONE: (530) 538-7572 FAX: (530) 534-5745

Inter-Departmental Memorandum

TO: Hon. Steven J. Howell, Presiding Judge

FROM: Cathi Grams, Director Employment & Social Services

SUBJECT: Grand Jury Response – Children’s Services Report

DATE: August 25, 2008

Department of Employment and Social Services responses to the Grand Jury Report

Findings

- 1. Contracted support services such as counseling and parent support groups are reportedly not available to non-English speaking parents. When needed, an interpreter can be hired, but funds for that are limited. Counseling for non-English speaking children is available through Behavioral Health.**

The respondent disagrees with the finding. Both counseling and parent support groups are available to non-English speaking parents, primarily in Spanish and Hmong. The department has the ability to enter into individual contracts to address the needs of non-English speaking parents that cannot be addressed within existing contracts. In addition, the department has a well-defined policy for staff to access in-house interpreters as well as our contracted Language Line Interpreter Service. The department will provide refresher training to staff on existing departmental policy for accessing interpreter services as well as the process for requesting services not covered through existing contracts no later than November 30, 2008.

- 2. Despite the efforts made for effective communication in Butte County Children’s Services (BCCS), there is some sense of disconnect between North County Children’s Services (NCCS) and South County Children’s Services (SCCS). Communication and consistency are hindered by program division and geographic distance. Notification of court policy changes have sometimes not been communicated to NCCS in a timely manner.**

The respondent agrees with the finding. BCCS has begun analyzing its communication practice and gaps between the two office locations. Plans are in place to redesign the management assignments with the goal of providing consistent information and support to the staff regardless of their work location. Full implementation is expected by October 2008.

3. Staff report that NCCS is in need of more access to attorney services.

The respondent disagrees with the finding. Attorney services are as readily available to both SCCS and NCCS. NCCS staff needs training regarding the various established processes to access attorney services available to them. This training will be provided to staff during unit meetings no later than November 30, 2008.

4. Clerical Support to Children's Services is sometimes complicated by a multi-program chain of command.

The respondent agrees with the finding. Support staff is now included in Children's Management meetings so they are available to discuss how best to provide clerical support to social work staff when changes in work processes and/or regulations are implemented. These meetings provide an ongoing opportunity for Clerical Support staff to make suggestions for improving business practices to support social work staff as well as improve efficiencies for clerical support staff.

5. To promote cross training, DESS receptionists are rotated to various divisions including SCCS. In the case of SCCS, receptionist rotation is detrimental. SCCS is a busy reception area, the Children's Services program is complex, and the clients are often dealing with highly emotional issues.

The respondent agrees with the finding. The issue of frequent rotation of reception staff in the SCCS has been addressed. There is agreement to assign staff to this function on a more long-term basis to ensure consistent service in both offices and for expertise to be developed in this position.

6. NCCS needs better access to interview rooms to provide confidential places to meet with families and children.

The respondent agrees with the finding. The NCCS does not have designated interview rooms for Children's Services staff to conduct confidential interviews however there are locations within the Chico Community Employment Center where this can occur. Training will be provided to staff on how to access interview space within the building no later than November 30, 2008. The

majority of confidential interviews are conducted off site, either in the families home or in an agreed upon location.

- 7. In SCCS, there is a covered outdoor play area used for supervised visitation that is in need of a way to address oppressive heat in the summer months.**

The respondent agrees with the finding. The play area is surrounded by tall walls that prohibit air flow causing the area to become quite warm in the summer months. BCCS has identified a funding source and is in the process of evaluating a safe and economical option to remedy this situation (e.g. fans, misters etc.) with an anticipated implementation date of September 15, 2008.

- 8. Social Workers spend over two thirds of their time in data entry and report work using the statewide Children's Welfare Service database (CWS). The amount of mandated information has increased dramatically in the last five years. This has made it difficult for Social Workers to keep up with their caseloads.**

The respondent agrees with the finding. Use of the Child Welfare Services Management System (CWS/CMS) is mandated by the State and is not a County option. The system enables counties to track prior history of families throughout the State as well as extract data that is used to monitor individual county performance and develop improvement plans for service delivery. Entering information into CWS/CMS has become more time-consuming over the past several years due to the increasing complexity of the program as well as outdated computer program design. At this time the State of California is engaged in a process to redesign the existing system into a web based program with an anticipated date of 2011. This revised system will be much more user-friendly and efficient. Staff training is constantly being provided to both refresh staff on current procedures as well as identify new time saving methods for data entry and case management. U.C. Davis is developing case management training for social work staff to address this issue and Butte County has been the pilot county to receive this training at no cost.

- 9. Due to the lack of authorized funds for overtime pay unless it is an emergency, some employees are reportedly working overtime without pay in order to meet deadlines.**

The respondent disagrees with the finding. A review of Social Work Supervisors indicates they are unaware of any staff that is working overtime without being compensated. The department will follow up to ensure this does not occur in the future.

- 10. Drug use in Butte County is a concern. Children's Services participates in the Methamphetamine Task Force and also partners with Drug Court. They also provide specialized training for foster parents of drug-addicted children. (OFR-Options for Recovery). However, the use of medical marijuana by parents conflicts with the Children's Service policy of a drug-free environment for children. There is abuse of "medical marijuana" prescriptions and it is often found to one of many drugs in use. There is not a consistent policy in place to respond to this difficult dilemma.**

The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. There is a consistent policy in place regarding any drug use that is based on the protection of children however the department's adherence to the policy is inconsistent and needs to be monitored closely. Supervisors will review the policy with staff in unit meetings no later than November 30, 2008 and will monitor compliance through individual case reviews on an ongoing basis.

- 11. Although there are several drug rehabilitation programs in Butte County for women, there are limited options for men.**

The respondent disagrees with the finding. There are programs in both North and South areas of the County. BCCS will provide training to all staff no later than November 30, 2008 to ensure they are aware of available resources and how to access them for their male parents

Recommendations

- 1. BCCS should encourage service providers to include non-English speaking families in their program plans.**

The recommendation has been implemented.

Contracted service providers are expected to provide services in a variety of languages, primarily Spanish and Hmong. When BCCS issues a request for proposal (RFP), the request includes the requirement that services be provided in a variety of languages as needed. Several of the service providers have individual staff that are bi-lingual and generally make those staff available when needed. The level of need for services in a variety of languages fluctuates and it is sometimes difficult for service providers to consistently have staff available to provide those services. When that occurs, BCCS has the ability to contract with individuals who can provide the needed service, or to provide interpreter services.

With regard to the process for accessing these bi-lingual services, it is not utilized as frequently and therefore can be more cumbersome for social worker staff. BCCS will provide refresher training to staff on existing departmental policy no

later than November 30, 2008, for accessing interpreter services as well as the process for requesting services not covered through existing service provide contracts

- 2. DESS and BCCS should review communication practices and revise them to address the disconnect issues between NCCS and SCCS, the consistent and complete flow of communication, and general morale issues.**

The recommendation has been partially implemented.

DESS and BCCS have already begun analyzing its communication practices and gaps. Plans are in place to redesign the management assignments with the goal of providing consistent information and support to the staff regardless of their work location. Full implementation is expected by October 2008.

- 3. BCCS should review the need for additional attorney services to NCCS and ensure that need is met.**

The recommendation to review the need for additional attorney services to NCCS has been implemented. The findings of the review indicate that there are sufficient attorney services to NCCS.

The current attorney has worked with supervisors and management to establish and communicate an effective process for accessing his services. The attorney has established a schedule of times he is available in each office when he is not in court. Currently he is in court approximately 22 hours per week and spends 7 hours in the office in Chico and 12 hours in the office in Oroville. A system has been developed for social workers and supervisors to request a staffing when he is not in the office. This system which involves phone and email communication appears to be working and the attorney has good response time when this process is used appropriately. Training will be provided to staff no later than November 30, 2008 regarding the established process to access attorney services.

- 4. DESS should consider ways to eliminate barriers in meeting BCCS clerical support needs and should consider the need for a permanent receptionist at SCCS.**

The recommendation has been implemented.

The issue of an experienced receptionist in the SCCS has been addressed and there is agreement to have a receptionist assigned on a more long-term basis in this area. Support staff is now included in Children's Management meetings so they are part of the team that evaluates better ways to do business for both clerical support and social work staff. This has eliminated many of the barriers.

In addition, BCCS is currently engaged in a complete organizational review with all BCCS staff of how we do business and support staff is an active and important part of that process.

5. BCCS should find a way to provide adequate confidential interview space at NCCS.

The recommendation has been implemented.

The availability of space in the Community Employment Center in Chico is an issue for all of the occupants of the building. There is finite space and we have many activities that happen in this building. We make every effort to afford all persons needing it a confidential interview space. We have looked at alternative outlying space but it is not a reasonable option at this time. We will continue to address these needs within the processes and space we currently have available. Training will be provided to staff about how to request and access interview space within the building no later than November 30, 2008.

6. To offset budget reductions, BCCS should identify needs and find ways to partner with service organizations, businesses, civic groups, religious institutions and individuals in Butte County to help provide needed funding and volunteer services for programs and projects.

The recommendation has been implemented.

BCCS is currently involved in a Community Alliance composed of community organizations committed to providing additional services for programs and clients. This group has met needs for families including activities for children, and household items for families whose children are returning home.

The Children's Services Coordinating Council has developed a committee charged with identifying and coordinating funding and services that may be available to BCCS and our community partners for the future.

7. BCCS should develop a solution to the oppressive summer heat problem in the outdoor supervised visitation area in SCCS.

The recommendation has not been fully implemented.

BCCS has identified a funding source and is in the process of evaluating a safe and economical resolution to this issue (e.g. fans, misters etc.). The expected date of completion of this project is September 15, 2008.

8. DESS and BCCS should explore ways to reduce the time demands placed on Social Workers from CWS data entry requirements and facilitate understanding of its process.

The recommendation will be partially implemented. Use of the Child Welfare Services Management System is mandated by the state and is not a county option. However, the county is exploring ways to streamline and expedite data entry through case management training.

The CWS/CMS computer system enables child welfare agencies to track prior history of families throughout the state as well as extract data that is used to monitor individual county performance and develop improvement plans for service delivery. Entering information into the CWS/CMS has become more time-consuming over the past several years due to the increasing complexity of the program as well as outdated computer program design. At this time the State of California is engaged in a process to modify the existing system with an estimated 2011 implementation date.

Staff are regularly updated regarding the importance of the information entered into the computer system and its usage for quality assurance in child welfare. Staff and supervisors meet regularly to identify and resolve individual issues with data entry and case management.

As a part of the current strategic planning process BCCS is looking at any adjustments that can be made to increase efficiency in the use of the CWS/CMS system without additional staff. BCCS is coordinating with UC Davis to develop a time/caseload management training series specifically designed around the CWS workload issues, including the cumbersome data entry requirements.

9. BCCS should establish a consistent medical marijuana policy which is based on the protection of children.

This recommendation has been implemented. BCCS already has a consistent medical marijuana policy that is based on the protection of children.

Medical Marijuana is treated in the same manner as any drug/alcohol that is identified as an issue in a report made to us. Risk factors to a child are evaluated by BCCS and include; drug/alcohol use, neglect issues, physical safety and protection issues. Once a child has been made a dependent of the Juvenile Court and placed in a plan of reunification, BCCS monitors the effect of drug usage through the caseplan. This means that regardless of the possession of a medical marijuana prescription, if the use of drugs is prohibited in the court approved case plan, BCCS would expect that the parent not use marijuana and look for alternative methods to deal with the underlying medical concern.

Supervisors will provide refresher training to staff on the established policy no later than November 30, 2008 and ensure adherence to the policy through individual case reviews on an ongoing basis.

10. BCCS should encourage the development of men's drug treatment options in the community.

The recommendation has been implemented

A drug treatment service geared for men is an area of need that the community has been working on for some time. DESS has been proactive in identifying the need for services among its child welfare families and encouraging the development of additional resources with our county and community partners who are funded for this activity. As a result there are currently drug treatment services for men available through the Well Ministry and Salvation Army drug treatment services. These include residential and outpatient treatment. There are co-ed drug treatment services on an outpatient basis provided by Butte County Behavioral Health in both Chico and Oroville. Butte County Behavioral Health will be providing Men's Health Groups that will be located in the Butte County Employment Centers and will be available to clients in the CalWORKs and Children's Services programs. These groups will address substance abuse issues as well as other issues affecting families.



GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Interoffice Memorandum

August 26, 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

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
By Grant Hunsicker, Property Manager
General Services Department

cc: Andy Pickett



Butte County

LAND OF NATURAL WEALTH AND BEAUTY

C. LINDA BARNES
TREASURER - TAX COLLECTOR
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING
25 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE – OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95965-3384
TELEPHONE: (530) 538-7701
FAX: (530) 538-7648

DATE: August 7, 2008
TO: Andy Pickett
Deputy Administrative Officer
FROM: Linda Barnes *LB*
Treasurer-Tax Collector

SUBJECT: Response to 2008 Butte County Grand Jury Final Report

The following are proposed responses to the current Grand Jury Report:

Findings

1. The Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office is efficient and well run.

The Treasurer-Tax Collector is pleased to agree with the finding.

2. Morale was reported to be high by staff in all departments.

The Treasurer-Tax Collector agrees with the finding.

3. Staff members reported respecting management and, in turn, they too were respected.

The Treasurer-Tax Collector agrees with the finding.

4. Office space is limited and could become a stressful issue. It also compromises confidentiality.

The Treasurer-Tax Collector agrees with the finding

5. The department has some one screen computers per desk for employees and lacks a counting/counterfeit machine for desk top work.

The Treasurer-Tax Collector partially agrees with the findings. Most workstations within the department function well with one computer monitor per desk. The Treasury has an additional counting/counterfeit machine on order for use at the front counter. A counterfeit detecting device was on order at the time of the inquiry and was installed for use in the Tax Division prior to the April receipt of property tax payments. An additional counterfeit detecting device was ordered for the Central Collections Division and has been in use for approximately seven months.

6. There is no conference room for staff or conference meetings.

The Treasurer-Tax Collector agrees with the finding

Recommendations

1. There are no recommendations regarding management and staff.
2. Administration and Board of Supervisors should seek resolution to space issues.

The recommendation is appropriate but requires further analysis. The Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office worked with General Services to arrange an assessment of work space issues. The walk through was delayed as a result of the recent fires but was rescheduled and took place on Friday, July 25.

Additional needs identified by the management team of the office include:

- Increased confidentiality and security for depositors/payers in lobby area.
- Larger lobby area needed. Present area is approximately 12'X18' and serves tax payers, delinquent debtors and Treasury banking customers, often at the same time. It frequently becomes congested and creates something of a security risk for large cash depositors.
- Two more workstations are needed in the Tax Division for extra help personnel. The department is currently using tables located in the staff break area as makeshift workstations.
- One more workstation in Central Collections.
- Client Consultation area for exchange of confidential information for Central Collections' clients as well as clients of other divisions.
- Conference room for meetings, interviews, performance reviews, confidential exchanges with staff members, etc.
- Creation of additional (walled in) office space to accommodate the Assistant Treasurer-Tax Collector –Treasury Division position.

3. The staff is in need of a conference room.

The recommendation was addressed during the assessment of the premises detailed above; however, implementation will be dependent upon available space and resources.

4. The department would benefit from "two screened" computers for employees.

The recommendation was reviewed by the Treasurer-Tax Collector's management team. It was determined that two desks in the Tax Division might benefit from dual monitors, but others are functioning successfully with one monitor at this time. One of the two desks in question has had dual monitors installed on a trial basis since mid-July. An assessment of the merits of dual monitors will occur 3-6 months after implementation.

5. **Acquire portable counting/counterfeit identification machine.**

The recommendation was partially implemented when a portable counterfeit detecting device was installed at the front counter in the Tax Division to verify cash payments from taxpayers. A second device was installed in Central Collections for payment verification purposes. The Treasury Division utilizes a counting/ counterfeit detecting machine located on a work surface toward the back of the office and, based on the recommendation, plans to purchase another for use at the Treasury front counter.

6. Consider confidentiality for customers in designing future office expansion.

This recommendation was implemented during the consultation with General Services on the space needs of the office. The assessment included the need for private consultation areas for clients of Central Collections and/or clients of other departments requiring a confidential location for conversation, as well as the benefits of increased lobby space.