

**BUTTE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT
BUTTE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

SUMMARY

The 2007/2008 Grand Jury members met with the Director of the Public Works Department to get a report on the scope and responsibilities of the department. He also presented the jury members with an organizational chart as well as inviting the jury members to visit Neal Road Landfill.

BACKGROUND

Public Works provides subdivision inspection, oversees services for public transit and operates Neal Road Landfill. Public Works maintains 1300 miles of roads and 130 bridges in Butte County.

The county is divided into nine districts for road, tree and bridge maintenance, and traffic control. Each district has a manager and staff. Public Works also has support staff, vehicle maintenance, inspections, engineering, and solid waste divisions.

The Public Works Department budget comes from tax dollars and grants. The budget is approximately 30 million dollars, not including Neal Road Landfill operations, which are supported by gate fees.

APPROACH

The Director of the Butte County Public Works Department was interviewed by the Grand Jury. The Director has been with Butte County for fourteen years and has a degree in Engineering from CSU, Chico. He is a hands-on operator, meeting with his managers on a regular basis to set goals and discuss operations.

The Grand Jury members visited Neal Road Landfill site. The Solid Waste Site Manager gave the members a tour of the facility, narrating while the members observed its operations.

DISCUSSION

The Grand Jury members learned that Neal Road Landfill has a system to prevent waste water from seeping into the ground water table, and a system to recover methane gas from the decomposing waste. Plans are in progress to use the gas collected for a future power generating system. Controls are in place to keep recyclable items out of the landfill disposal area. The landfill accepts solid waste, septic waste, and trash. It also has a limited recycling capacity.

Septic fees are charged by the gallon while solid waste and trash are assessed by the pound. There is a scale on site to record the poundage. Commercial carriers log in their weight daily and are billed monthly. Other fees are collected at the gate. Cash is deposited daily with the Treasurer and sworn off by the Auditor.

The volume of waste delivered to the landfill site has been reduced as much as fifty percent by the use of recycling programs.

Butte County is working on an agreement with the City of Chico to accept septic waste for treatment and processing at their sewage treatment facility.

Future projects include a two million dollar expansion of the Neal Road Landfill site to better accommodate the queue from Neal Road to the weigh-in scales for the public and commercial carriers. This expansion will also improve the drop off of recycled materials such as air conditioners, washers, dryers, and refrigerators. This expansion is planned to begin by the end of 2010.

FINDINGS

None

RECOMMENDATIONS

None

RESPONSE REQUIRED

None