

HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Health, Education and Social Services Committee of the 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury pursuant to California Penal Code §§925 and 933.5 to observe, investigate and report on citizen complaints of health, education and social service activities, safeguard the public from misfeasance, malfeasance and nonfeasance and recommend reasonable action addressing related concerns of the community. It is the Committee's concern not only to make the citizens of Kern County aware of its findings but also make long-term positive impact and economic recommendations on behalf of the community.

HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS:



Judith Waters, Chair
Malinda Click
Arletta Norman
Barbara Weller

HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee has written and published the following reports:

- County of Kern Public Health Services Disease Control Division
- Kelly F. Blanton Academy
- Kern County Emergency Medical Services, Kern County Sheriff's Office and Kern County Fire Department
- Kern County Veterans Services Department
- Shafter Research Station
- William E. Whiting Communications Center and Emergency Operations Center

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee received and responded to ten complaints.

Additionally, the Health, Education and Social Services Committee toured and/or researched the following: Kern County Human Services and Kern County Mental Health Department.

Total investigative miles traveled by Committee: 52

COUNTY OF KERN PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES DISEASE CONTROL DIVISION

PREFACE:

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee (Committee) of the 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) investigated the County of Kern Public Health Services Disease Control Division (Division) response to an increased demand for immunization clinics with a concomitantly decreased funding for the department.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

The California Penal Codes §§925 and 933 authorize the Grand Jury to investigate and report on the various departments throughout Kern County.

The Committee viewed a newspaper article quoting the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicting a pertussis outbreak in 2012-2013.

PROCESS:

Investigative efforts included internet research and statistical reports. The Department administrators were interviewed. An introductory program entitled *California's Innovative Immunization Billing Plan 2011* was reviewed.

BACKGROUND:

- A. The County of Kern Public Health Service (CKPHS) was created in 1931. The mission statement is “to protect and safeguard the health and safety of the community” including the following objectives:
 - Prevention of disease
 - Creative and innovative solutions to emerging health risks

FACTS:

- A. The CKPHS operates one central clinic and eight satellite clinics. Three satellite clinics were closed due to budget restraints. With the newly approved budget all three clinics will re-open.
- B. All clinics offer Advisory Committee Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended immunizations to all children.
- C. There has been an increase in the number of clients in the last five years for immunization services. California A.B.354, passed in 2010, requires students entering 7th and 12th grades to receive a booster vaccine for pertussis (Tdap). In 2007 and 2011 medical staff administered 20,492 and 40,451 doses of vaccine respectively to children 0-18 years of age.

- D. Since 1986 the CKPHS began collecting fees for certain services. Prior to 1986 all services were administered free of charge. Twenty five years later, fees have become necessary in order to continue providing many services.
- E. The fees are mandatory to collect reimbursement from Medi-Cal, Medicare and private insurance. The primary entities billed were Medi-Cal, Fam Pact, Child Health and Disability Prevention and two local Medi-Cal managed health care plans. The Division had attempted to bill private insurance but met many barriers to implementing successful private insurance billing practices.
- F. The CKPHS received a grant from the CDC to act as a pilot project for California's Innovative Immunization Billing Plan.
- G. The fee schedule was developed so as not to exceed the cost of services. A schedule based on a sliding scale allows the fee for mandated services to be reduced or waived for clients unable to pay.
- H. The organization personnel were credentialed to qualify as participating providers to private insurance companies. The staff was trained in information gathering and coding for billing purposes.
- I. Revenue reimbursement from July through December 2009 was \$42,961. From January through June 2010 revenue was \$481,371. Private insurance revenue increased from \$6,087 between July and December of 2009 to \$9,568-\$11,681 between January and June of 2010.
- J. Presently the CKPHS has completed preferred provider status with six private insurance companies in Kern County.
- K. The Division does not foresee an outbreak of pertussis due to the large number of vaccines administered in 2010, 2011 and 2012.
- L. The Division has piloted a program to remain financially viable.
- M. The Division has received a grant to present, teach and assist with the implementation of California's Innovative Immunization Billing Plan to six selected California counties.

COMMENTS:

The County of Kern Public Health Services is commended for addressing the problems of decreasing public financial support and increased demand for service. The County of Kern Public Health Services Disease Control Division has piloted an innovative program that addresses revenue problems. The County of Kern Public Health Services continues to act as a safety net for the community it serves.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

NONE

NOTES:

- The County of Kern Public Health Services Disease Control Department should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.
- Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury, and click on: Sign up for early releases.
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NO RESPONSE REQUIRED

Kern County Board of Supervisors
Response to Grand Jury Final Report

**COUNTY OF KERN
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES DISEASE CONTROL DIVISION**

Response to Findings:

The Board of Supervisors notes that the Grand Jury's findings are substantially correct.

Response to Recommendation:

The Grand Jury report contains no recommendations. The Board of Supervisors appreciates the Grand Jury's review of this critical County function.

ADM_GJ_PH_DISEASECONTROL_B

KELLY F. BLANTON ACADEMY

SUMMARY:

Kelly F. Blanton Academy (Blanton Academy) is a Juvenile Court School established in 1987 designed to work closely with the Kern County Probation Department (Probation Department). The mission of the Court and Community Schools is to support the educational, social and emotional needs of students and community members.

The Academy is part of the Community School Concept. There are nine sites, 11 programs and 16 Court School Programs.

PURPOSE:

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee (Committee) of the 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) visited and toured the Blanton Academy February 27, 2013, pursuant to California Penal Code §925. Blanton Academy is located at 330 East Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, California 93305.

PROCESS:

The Committee met and interviewed:

1. Administrator-Division of Student Services, Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS), former Director of Alternative Education
2. Principal of Blanton Academy
3. Probation Officer at Blanton Academy
4. Juvenile Court Referee
5. Reviewed internet information
6. Reviewed informational pamphlet

BACKGROUND/FACTS:

- A. Juvenile Court Schools are operated and administered by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools per Education Code §48645.
- B. The students at Blanton Academy are High-Risk First Time Offenders and High-Risk Transitioning Youth.
- C. The Kern County Board of Education oversees the school.
- D. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to become active members of the Court/Community School Site Council.

- E. Blanton Academy is a non-residential school operated as a year round open entry/open exit basis. Students are grade level seven through twelve and are Wards of the Court. Transportation is not provided. Breakfast and lunch are provided. No vending machines on campus.
- F. Blanton Academy is co-educational.
- G. A Child Care Center is on campus and accepts infants and children up to three years of age. There are 20 children in the Child Care Program. Some are children of the students attending the Academy. The Child Care Center admission is based on availability.
- H. Through the Cal Safe Program childcare and parenting skills are offered to eligible pregnant and parenting teens enrolled in the programs.
- I. Current enrollment is 78 students and the figure fluctuates.
- J. The curriculum is designated to meet all California High School requirements. As the student enters the school assessments are made to determine reading and math levels, evaluations of transcripts and graduation requirements. Academic weaknesses are addressed and an individual learning plan is developed.
- K. The target class size is 23 students.
- L. The Probation Department has an agreement with the KCSOS to collaborate in providing services to High-Risk First Time Offenders and High-Risk Transitioning Youth.
- M. Four Probation Officers are stationed at Blanton Academy. The case load is 40 (includes enrolled students and off site cases).
- N. The Probation Officers have gun lockers available for weapons and pepper spray.
- O. A clothed body search is performed each morning upon entry for contraband (i.e. weapons, drugs, etc.). Drug testing may be done at the discretion of the Probation Officer providing a court order is in place stating such terms should apply.
- P. Students are evaluated on academic progress, attendance and behavior. Steps are accumulated for deviation and if after counseling and intervention the student accumulates three steps the student is referred back to the Court.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The school is clean, fenced and well-equipped.

- F2. The entire staff, both certified and classified, has chosen to work toward quality instruction in the high risk setting.
- F3. Students in the classroom seem attentive to the instructor, polite and verbally open.
- F4. The students dress is clean, neat and appropriate.
- F5. Students may participate in various activities: Drug Free Youth Summit, Leaders in Life, College Campus Tours, the Women's Leadership Conference and Engineering Day at California State University at Bakersfield.
- F6. The Referee of the Juvenile Court evaluates the efficacy of the Blanton Academy Program as a positive outcome for one third to one half of the students. No statistics are available.
- F7. The students have opportunities to have life experiences in a clean, ordered and safe environment to encourage behavioral changes.

COMMENTS:

The Committee wishes to commend the Administrator Division of Student Services Kern County Superintendent of Schools, the Principal of Blanton Academy, the Staff, the Probation Officers and the Referee of the Juvenile Court for dedicated services.

RECOMMENDATION:

- R1. The Academy should consider incorporating a Grant Writer position to receive more funding through Grants. The funding would provide exposure to Community Resources such as Zoos, Museums and Sporting Events.

NOTES:

The Kelly F. Blanton Academy should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

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RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:

**PRESIDING JUDGE
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**cc: FOREMAN
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

August 30, 2013

Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxtun Avenue, 2nd Floor
Bakersfield, CA 93301

We are pleased to respond to the Grand Jury's report regarding the Kelly F. Blanton Academy, one of the campuses in our Alternative Education program. We appreciate the time and attention that the Grand Jury members gave to this outstanding program, and for the positive report regarding the Academy's program outcomes.

There was one recommendation in the report that I would like to address regarding the possibility of incorporating a Grant Writer position to receive more funding for grants. We agree. KCSOS does indeed employ a Grant Writer who has dedicated a significant amount of time to securing grant resources for the alternative education program. One recent example is the YouthBuild grant, which secured \$1 million in US Department of Labor funds to provide hands-on construction training for Kern's Alternative Education students in partnership with the Kern chapter of Habitat for Humanity. We will continue to dedicate our Grant Writer's time to help enhance the services available to Blanton Academy students.

We welcome the Grand Jury's input at any time and would welcome another visit to any of our Alternative Education sites should that appeal to you. Please call me at (661) 636-4000 if I may answer any questions or provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Stephen L. Sanders
Chief of Staff

SLS/jah

Cc: Foreman, Kern County Grand Jury

KERN COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND KERN COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

SUMMARY:

The 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) Health, Education and Social Services Committee (Committee) was assigned a complaint on Kern County Emergency Medical Services (KCEMS) and Kern County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) regarding a rescue effort in the Tehachapi Mountains.

PURPOSE:

California Penal Code §§925 and 933 authorizes the Kern County Grand Jury to investigate and report on the various departments throughout Kern County.

PROCESS:

The Committee inquiries effort included review of:

- Reading the original complaint and all accompanying documents
- Interview of all Departments and individuals involved except the Emergency Medical Technician and the Paramedic (ambulance responders)
- The entire actual footage of the hoist rescue of the individual
- The Kern County Coroner's Report
- California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (CAL OSHA) report
- Kern County Emergency Medical Services Incident report
- Internet article research
- Patient Care Report from Kern County Sheriff's Office/Air 5 (helicopter)
- Kern County Administrative Office report: "Response to October 26, 2010 Referral Regarding Sheriff and Fire Departments' Helicopter Programs" for cross reference

BACKGROUND/FACTS:

- A. The KCSO has three airplanes and five helicopters. The per hour cost of flying the Huey Helicopter is \$800. The Bell Helicopter costs \$250 per hour to fly.
- B. There are nine certified Deputy Sheriff Pilots.
- C. The KCSO uses the approved Coast Guard training for hoist rescues.
- D. The KCSO has had responsibility of Search and Rescue including helicopter hoist rescues since October 14, 1969.

- E. Local Helicopter/Hoist Training for KCSO is executed at Hart Park.
- F. The Kern County Fire Department (KCFD) has helicopter coverage Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and the KCSO has coverage on Monday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- G. An interview with the responding Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic was not allowed. The Grand Jury's authority to interview was questioned by the private company management of the responders.

FINDINGS:

- F1. An additional safety hazard is added when Loggers work alone and are not close enough to each other in an emergency situation to communicate quickly.
- F2. Loggers are not required to take Basic Life Support and/or First Aid Training.
- F3. The Loggers in the particular incident were not carrying radios to communicate with each other.
- F4. Through Resolution #69-683 dated August 9, 2012, from the County Board of Supervisors, KCSO and KCFD have been training together and have new radios to communicate allowing a more harmonious environment to better serve the public's needs. There is an annual update of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two departments.
- F5. Regrettably, funding is not available to maintain full time staffing for both departments' helicopters in order for the **closest** helicopter to respond to emergencies.

COMMENTS:

The Committee commends the KCSO, KCFD and KCEMS for the progress in working together for the betterment of public safety and for the cooperation in providing information for the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. A Chief Helicopter position should be created with licensed pilots to oversee helicopter programs in both Sheriff's and Fire Departments.
- R2. The KCSO and KCFD should revise the current MOU for Dispatch to send the nearest helicopter when both aircraft are fully staffed and available.
- R3. The KCSO and KCFD should continue to work and train together.

NOTES:

The Kern County Emergency Medical Services, Kern County Sheriff's Office and Kern County Fire Department should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

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**cc: FOREMAN
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**



1350 Norris Road
Bakersfield, California 93308-2231

July 12, 2013

The Honorable Colette Humphrey, Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

The 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) Health, Education, and Social Services Committee was assigned a complaint on Kern County Emergency Medical Services (KCEMS) and the Kern County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) regarding a rescue effort in the Tehachapi Mountains. In accordance with California Penal Code Section 925 and 933, the Kern County Grand Jury investigated this complaint.

Based on their findings in the Grand Jury report published May 15, 2013, the Sheriff's Office is filing a copy of our response to the Grand Jury's recommendations with the Clerk of the Board as directed.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. A Chief Helicopter position should be created with licensed pilots to oversee helicopter programs in both Sheriff's and Fire Departments.
- R2. The KCSO and KCFD should revise their current MOU for dispatch to send the nearest helicopter when both aircraft are fully staffed and available.
- R3. The KCSO and KCFD should continue to work and train together.

KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE RESPONSE

- R1. The Kern County Sheriff's Office and the Kern County Fire Department Executive Staff meet quarterly to insure both agencies helicopter programs continue to operate in a safe and effective manner. At the next meeting both agencies will discuss the feasibility and recommendation of adding a Chief Helicopter position. This recommendation poses many challenges given the Sheriff's primary responsibility is law enforcement and Search and Rescue, and Fire's primary responsibility is fire suppression. The Sheriff's Office and Fire Department are committed to work together to explore options that would improve our operations and provide the best service to the Citizens of Kern County.

July 15, 2013

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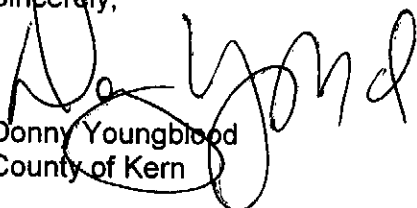
- R2. The hoist-equipped medium lift helicopters operated by both agencies are critically important for each agency to perform their primary mission. Having designated hoist-equipped medium lift helicopters scheduled in the current configuration utilizing our current dispatch protocol provides both agencies the aircraft, equipment, crews, training and maintenance time needed to insure resources are available to meet their mission requirements. The current helicopter hoist-rescue response protocol has been established to provide the best coverage while remaining cost effective. The Kern County Sheriff's Office has primary responsibility for hoist-rescue four days per week (Friday-Monday) and the Kern County Fire Department has primary responsibility three days per week (Tuesday-Thursday). Due to the infrequency and high cost of hoist rescues, staging the three hoist-rescue helicopters throughout the County in order to respond to less than two hoist rescues a month on average, is not cost effective. As such, there will be times when the closest response helicopter will not be responding as the helicopter or crew will be out of service or attending to other mission critical activities.

The MOU and Annual Operating Plan is reviewed and approved each year by the Sheriff and Fire Chief. The Sheriff and Fire Chief will continue to discuss the most effective and efficient response protocol.

- R3. The Kern County Sheriff's Office and the Kern County Fire Department are committed to work and train together in order to provide the residents of Kern County with the highest level of search and rescue service.

The Kern County Sheriff's Office sincerely appreciates the efforts of the Grand Jury in its review of this complaint. Rest assured the Kern County Sheriff's Office will remain committed to meeting the needs of the people of Kern County.

Sincerely,



Donny Youngblood
County of Kern

- cc: Undersheriff Rosemary Wahl
Chief Deputy Shelly Castaneda
Chief Deputy Francis Moore
Chief Deputy Brian Wheeler
Chief Deputy Kevin Zimmerman
Clerk of the Board
Kern County Grand Jury Foreman
Assistant CAO

KERN COUNTY VETERANS SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PREFACE:

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee (Committee) of the 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) visited the Kern County Veterans Services Department (KCVSD) August 23, 2012. The offices are located at 1120 Golden State Avenue, Bakersfield, California 93301.

The Committee also visited the Bakersfield Veterans Center (Vet Center) located at 1110 Golden State Avenue, Bakersfield, California 93301. This is a Federal agency established as part of the Veterans Affairs Readjustment Counseling Service dedicated to helping veterans adjust to a civilian lifestyle. The Vet Center sits adjacent to the KCVSD building and the two agencies work very closely together assisting veterans.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

California Penal Code §925 authorizes the Grand Jury to investigate and report on the various departments throughout Kern County. The Committee reviewed past records and determined the KCVSD had not been visited by the Grand Jury in the past three years.

PROCESS:

Investigation efforts included internet research, budget review; past, current and recommended. KCVSD staff was interviewed and input was solicited from veterans and veteran dependants who had received services. Prior Grand Jury reports were reviewed along with various documents concerning veteran services.

BACKGROUND:

KCVSD was established by the Kern County Board of Supervisors on September 1, 1944. Barrack buildings were moved from Minter Field and located at 1120 Golden State Avenue where the Veterans Administration (VA) provided medical and dental services to returning disabled veterans. In 1971 KCVSD moved to improved facilities and occupied offices at different locations throughout Kern County. Finally, in 1999 KCVSD had come full circle and again occupies the building located at 1120 Golden State Avenue.

FACTS:

A. KCVSD provides several direct services to local veterans to include:

- Compensation (service-related injuries or disease)
- Re-open compensation for possible increase in benefits
- Dependency Indemnity Compensation (survivors annuity based upon services connected death)
- Pension (for war-era veterans)
- Death Pension (for survivors of war-era veterans who died of a non-service connected disability)
- Housebound and Aid Attendance allowance
- State Veterans Home(s)
- Requests for military records and decorations
- Discharge upgrade
- Correction of military records
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Home loan guaranty information
- Education benefits
- College fee waivers
- Life insurance (National Service Life Insurance, Service Group Life Insurance, Veterans Group Life Insurance)
- Burial benefits
- Comprehensive benefit counseling
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder counseling referrals
- Claim preparation and submission
- Claim follow-up
- Initiate and develop appeals when warranted
- Networking with Federal, State and Local agencies.
- Transportation to hospital in Los Angeles four days a week
- Participation in Transition Assistance Program (TAP) briefing at the Naval Base

B. Referral services include:

- Employment assistance through Employer Training Resource
- Public assistance
- VA medical services
- Social Security
- Food referrals
- Stress Counseling referrals to other agencies. The Bakersfield Vet Center, a counseling service funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs, is located adjacent to KCVSD.

C. Additional facts include:

- A food closet is available at this location for veterans. Pet food is also available for the pets of veterans.
- In the last two years offices in several outlying areas have had to be closed.
- There are approximately 50,000 veterans in Kern County. Of these veterans KCVSD provides services to approximately 28,000.
- Each year in the fall KCVSD assists with the Veteran's Stand Down. Last year at the Stand Down more than 300 veterans received services.
- The 2013 budget was approved and the increased amount provides for much needed additions to staffing levels and equipment upgrades.
- California Veterans Assistance Foundation provides transitional housing for veterans.

FINDINGS:

- F1. With the approval of the 2013 budget two new representatives in the Ridgecrest and Lake Isabella areas will be added.
- F2. With the approval of the 2013 budget KCVSD will also be able to expand the teleconferencing abilities.
- F3. Additional computers are also planned to be purchased which will allow claims to be processed at home.
- F4. KCVSD is projecting having a completely paperless system by the year 2014 which will immensely expedite claims.
- F5. Employment services provided through Employer Training Resources are located on site. Employment services are still provided yet the amount of service has been reduced due to a recent staffing reduction.
- F6. KCVSD provides counseling services on site and can also escort severe cases next door to the Bakersfield Vet Center. The close proximity between agencies allows KCVSD to remain with the veteran and walk the veteran next door thus never having to leave the veteran alone.
- F7. This year KCVSD expects to assist with the Veteran's Stand Down on October 11, 2012. The Stand Down should begin at 8:00 am and continue until 3:00 pm. This year's Stand Down will be held at Stramler Park and will hopefully attract numerous veterans.

COMMENTS:

The Committee thanks all members of the Kern County Veteran Services Department staff for the warm reception and tour of the facilities. The Committee was impressed with the maintenance and organization of the property.

RECOMMENDATION:

R1. When funds become available the staffing levels of Employer Training Resources should be restored to previous levels.

NOTES:

The Kern County Veterans Services Department should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

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Kern County Board of Supervisors
Response to Grand Jury Final Report

KERN COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Response to Findings:

The Board of Supervisors notes that the Grand Jury's findings are substantially correct.

Response to Recommendation:

The Grand Jury recommended that when funding becomes available, Employers' Training Resource (ETR) staffing levels be restored to prior levels. The ETR Department will explore grant opportunities to augment employment services staffing levels onsite at the Veterans Service Department.

ADM_GJ_VETS_B

SHAFTER RESEARCH STATION

SUMMARY:

The 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury Health, Education and Social Services Committee (HESS) inquired into the co-operative venture of Kern County with San Joaquin Valley Quality Cotton Growers Association to maintain the operation of the Shafter Cotton Research Station (SCRS or SRS).

Mission of Stewardship: *San Joaquin Valley Quality Cotton Growers Association will manage and operate the Shafter Research Station as a multi-purpose facility which will host valuable agricultural research as its core function, while simultaneously providing educational and historical preservation opportunities designed to support and complement the core function.*

PURPOSE :

California Penal Code §§925 and 933 authorizes the Kern County Grand Jury to investigate and report on the various departments throughout Kern County. At the Kern County Board of Supervisors meeting on July 17, 2012, Executive Vice President and General Manager of the San Joaquin Valley Quality Cotton Growers Association (SJVQCGA) presented a plan for the operation and management of the SCRS. The plan specified changing a public managed agency, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to a privately managed/public sector agency that would support a more diverse array of beneficiaries.

PROCESS:

The Committee inquiries effort included:

- Internet Research
- Statistical reports
- Informational pamphlets
- Interviewed the Manager of Shafter Research Center, 17053 Shafter Avenue, Shafter, California
- Interviewed the Dean of School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics of California State University, 9001 Stockdale Highway, Bakersfield, California
- Telephone interview with Chief Financial Officer of Kern Community College District
- Verified Mineral Rights royalty payment by the Kern County Property Management Department
- Telephone interview with the Shafter Historical Society Curator

BACKGROUND/FACTS:

- A. The Shafter Cotton Research Station was established in 1922 on 80 acres of land and mineral rights donated to Kern County by local agricultural interests with the understanding that the County would use these assets for agricultural research. The County provided buildings and infrastructure and the USDA provided scientific staff and management for the venture. Acala cotton was developed and in 1925 the valley was a one variety cotton district resulting in premium cotton fibers with a worldwide demand.
- B. The Shafter Cotton Research Station was recognized in 1997 on the National Registry of Historical Places by the National Parks Service. A plaque was placed on the site as a California Registered Historical Landmark by the State Department of Parks and Recreation in 1997.
- C. The USDA withdrew from management and research at SCRS in June 2012 due to budget restraints. Four research scientists departed at that time.
- D. Land, buildings and infrastructures remained as Kern County assets with \$281,990.71 received as royalty on mineral rights in 2011.
- E. Equipment was donated to the Kern Community College District, inventoried and clearly labeled with a lease for the use of equipment that will be paid to Kern Community College District.
- F. San Joaquin Valley Quality Cotton Growers has invested time, financial support and management in developing a plan to continue operating the station as a research site for varied agricultural interests as crop diversity has changed the landscape of Kern County agriculture.
- G. The SJVQCG has leased 50 acres of the land for agricultural use. Income will be used for maintenance, renovation of laboratories, office site and management. An annual fund of \$50,000 will be donated by SJVQCG for research endeavors.
- H. The assets of the site include 28 structures:
 - Office space
 - Laboratory space
 - Mechanical maintenance building
 - Five green houses
 - One bio-level II green house never used due to energy requirement
 - Original adobe house completed in 1925
 - The average age of the buildings is 53 years
- I. The Executive Vice President of SJVQCG and newly appointed manager of SRS requested and received \$200,000 as an allocation of funds from Kern County for

- infrastructure, maintenance and improvement. A portion of the funds will be used to build a solar powered electrical generating plant.
- J. The equipment maintenance building has been cleared, inventoried and is ready for use.
- K. Ten acres of land has been prepared for agricultural research planting. Water is assured by Shafter Water Agency and a deep well is on the property.
- L. Kern Community College District has agreed to serve as lead institution for the educational component and has supported the SRS for potential as a site for training of student curriculum.
- M. California State University Bakersfield School of Natural Science, Mathematics and Engineering has committed to a program that will establish a Bachelor of Engineering with a concentration in Agriculture. The Degree Program will begin accepting students in two years. These students will be interning in the laboratories.
- N. The Shafter Historical Society has committed to update the adobe structure to display documents, books and diverse related objects of historical interest. The building will be open to the public on weekends with a docent in attendance.
- O. A partial list of colleges, universities, organizations and companies who have expressed an interest to conduct research at the Shafter Research Station includes:
- University of California
 - University of Minnesota
 - California State University of Bakersfield
 - Bakersfield College
 - Texas State University
 - Paramount Farms
 - Project Apis
 - USDA
 - Almond Board of California
 - Boyer Crop Science
 - Forage Genetics International
 - Vintage Nurseries
 - Bio-Genetics

COMMENTS:

The HESS Committee wishes to thank the General Manager of the Shafter Research Station for the open and enthusiastic manner the station program was explained and the tour conducted. The Committee also thanks the Dean of CSUB School of Natural

Sciences and Mathematics and the Vice Chancellor, Governmental and External Relations, Bakersfield College for sharing plans for the educational use of the Station.

The partnership of private management/public interest is a new approach in maintaining programs and property of great value to the surrounding populations for the public welfare. The grounds of the station have been cleaned and landscaped. The farm machinery has been refurbished and usable equipment identified and labeled. Building offices have been cleaned and areas for renovation noted. The station is projecting 50% leasing of facility in one year and 100% occupancy in three years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1. The station should continue to develop and strengthen involvement with local educational institutions.

R2. Continue to market available research facilities to various agricultural interests.

R3. Establish an advisory committee to:

- Determine budget and accounting procedures
- Provide advice on compatibility of research and establish priority of use
- Provide advice on facility functionality and prioritization of needed improvements
- Determine authority and responsibility of the committee

NOTES:

The Shafter Research Station should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury, and click on: Sign up for early releases.

Present and past Kern County Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the Kern County Grand Jury website: www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury.

RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:

**PRESIDING JUDGE
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**cc: FOREMAN
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**



San Joaquin Valley
Quality Cotton Growers Association

®

August 12, 2013

To: PRESIDING JUDGE
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

Re: Response to Kern County Grand Jury Report on The Shafter Research Station

Response to Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommended that the Station continues to develop and strengthen involvement with local educational institutions. We heartily concur and are in the process of establishing work experience /student intern program for students at Kern Community College District. In addition, plans are underway to develop meaningful collaboration with California State University Bakersfield.

The report also recommended that we continue to market available research facilities to various agricultural groups. Much of the first year of operation required extensive reorganization and inventorying of equipment and supplies abandoned by USDA upon their withdrawal. Now that the property is in a semblance of order, we are redoubling our efforts to market the facilities. There are now 4 active research programs in place on the Station with several more in the process of development. Part of the work to increase the visibility of the Station included a website designed to allow visitors to learn what facilities are available as well as identify the research work being conducted.

The site address is www.shafter-research.com

Finally, the report recommended establishing an advisory committee. We have identified several individuals whose background, experience, and interest will provide valuable input from varying perspectives on issues such as budgeting and accounting, compatibility and priority of potential research to be conducted on site, facility functionality, priority of improvement, and internal governance. Several individuals have been contacted and have agreed to serve on the advisory committee. It is anticipated that the committee will meet at least twice annually.

On behalf of San Joaquin Valley Quality Cotton Growers Association, I wish to thank the Kern County Grand Jury and the Kern County Board of Supervisors for their interest in agricultural research and the support of The Shafter Research Station.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg F. Palla'.

Greg F. Palla
Executive Vice President & General Manager

Cc: FOREMAN
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

WILLIAM E. WHITING COMMUNICATIONS CENTER AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

SUMMARY :

On Thursday, March 21, 2013, the 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) Health, Education and Social Services Committee (Committee) conducted a tour of the Kern County Communications Center (Com Center) and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located at 2601 Panorama Drive Bakersfield, California 93306 per Penal Code §§ 925 and 933.

PROCESS:

The Committee met with the Kern County Fire Chief, the Emergency Services Manager, a Lieutenant, the Kern County Fire Dispatch Manager and the Kern County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Manager.

BACKGROUND/FACTS:

- A. County employees are deemed "Disaster Service Worker's" in the event of an emergency. There are 52 seats in the (EOC) which are filled by persons from various County agencies. They are three deep in the event the first or second contact cannot be reached. A new seat has been added by the Director of Aging and Adult Center and is a Functional Needs Chair.
- B. The Emergency Response Managers in chronological order are the Kern County Fire Chief, the Kern County Sheriff and the Kern County Under-Sheriff.
- C. January 31, 2013, EOC purchased head phones which can be used to mitigate noise. Radios are available at the stations in the event land-line and/or cell phone service is not working. Communications may be completed between EOC and Department of Operation Centers.
- D. HAM radio operators (RACES; Radio Amateur Communications Emergency Services) are set up to work at the EOC if needed. There are two coordinators; one for Western Kern County and one for Eastern Kern County. The funds were obtained through grant money.
- E. A scanner which prints up to a five foot wide map in the EOC is useful for zooming specific effected areas.

- F. Eight big-screen televisions in the EOC are used for monitoring the news media in the event of an emergency. There is an enormous projector that hangs from the ceiling which projects onto a main screen for information dissemination.
- G. An extensive, one of a kind mock exercise was executed on January 31, 2013, to emulate a Lake Isabella Dam disaster. All EOC personnel were activated then an After Action Report was developed and weaknesses were strengthened.
- H. Kern County is Region five and can receive mutual aid from other surrounding Regions in the event of an emergency. Local schools can be used for shelter with orders by the Kern County Fire Chief.
- I. The EOC is a “Public Safety Building” which was built to resist disasters and can be run for three days continuously. More diesel fuel can be obtained to sustain it longer. The building was built out of the flood plain areas.
- J. The “Reverse 911 System” or “Ready Kern” is free to the public and notifies when an evacuation process needs to occur, disasters occur or if there is an “at risk” missing person. Kern County now funds this program. Formerly it was funded by grants. A cost of \$72,000/year buys 20,000 minutes of air time. Kern County Sheriff’s Office has additional funding available if more minutes are needed. With an emergency proclamation from the Governor’s Office, Kern County could get reimbursed by the State of California.
- K. The Salvation Army, Southern Baptists and Kern County Fire Department has massive feeding capabilities. EOC has a “medical reserve” list available.
- L. The Kern County Board of Supervisors allocated four million dollars to tear down the old facility and build the EOC in December 2009. There was an additional \$900,000.00 grant through Homeland Security. The EOC is unique and is one of the best in the State of California.
- M. “Planning, Training, Exercise and Modifying” is EOC’s motto.
- N. Bakersfield City, Kern County and California City all use the Dispatch services for the Fire Departments at the Panorama location. Four additional Dispatch positions have been approved (one Dispatcher for each shift). The Kern County Board of Supervisors just approved the move to the former Verizon building behind the current Communications Center. Kern County Sheriff’s Office Communications Center will move into the current Fire Dispatch building and will expand.
- O. In August 2013, Mendocino County will start a “9-1-1” pilot program which will allow pictures to be taken with cell phones and sent immediately to the corresponding Fire Department.

- P. Kern County Fire Dispatch has 21 County employees, eight City employees and one Supervisor. An extra Office Service Specialist could be used to free up the Communication Center Manager's time. Training is continuous for one year. "Verbal Judo" is part of the training Dispatchers receive to calm callers down. Only three percent of society has the ability to sustain a Dispatcher's position.
- Q. Kern County Sheriff's Office Communication Center has 35 Dispatchers, six Supervisors and are hiring back six more Dispatcher positions which were previously lost due to funding.

FINDINGS:

- F1. California Accidental Release Program (Cal ARP) is designed to minimize the risk that hazardous substances will cause immediate harm to the public and the environment. With trains coming through Kern County and up to Tehachapi tens of thousands of people could be at risk. Twenty percent of the Kern County population who CAN NOT be self-sufficient will receive first response such as patients in Hospitals and Nursing Homes. It could take up to a week before help responds to self-sufficient individuals. Each and every person who is able should have an emergency kit for public preparedness. Less than five percent of the United States population has an Emergency Kit for Public Preparedness.
- F2. The September 2013 Public Preparedness Program has been cancelled. October 2013 a "Zombie Apocalypse Preparedness Program" will take place instead.
- F3. The facilities are also used for other large Police, Fire functions, workshops and meetings.
- F4. Lake Isabella is an earthen dam and would corrode slowly rather than break or explode like a concrete dam. If it does "break" there would be an initial cause, such as an earthquake. Water may be released to prevent the dam from breaking which may make it impossible to get from South to North Bakersfield safely due to levies flooding. The Southwest areas of Bakersfield would have ten hours to flee prior to flooding from Lake Isabella dam. Golden Empire Transit (GET) busses, school busses, and any accessible vans will have evacuation pick up points.
- F5. "Ready Kern" is a telephone emergency notification system that can be used to notify the public about issues that may affect one's safety. The information given is never sold or used for commercial purposes. EOC personnel strongly encourage individuals to sign up for this service by either calling 2-1-1 or on line at www.ReadyKern.com. No mandatory evacuations take place in California.

COMMENTS:

The HESS Committee thanks the Director of Emergency Services, the Emergency Services Manager, the Kern County Sheriff's Lieutenant and Communication Center's Fire and Sheriff's Office Dispatch Managers for the tour and time spent departing important information.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. Continued joint training between the Kern County Fire Department, the Kern County Sheriff's Office and the Kern County Emergency Operations Center.
- R2. It is imperative that Hazardous Material Chemical teams be implemented due to the risks from the trains and semi-trucks traversing through Kern County carrying hazardous materials.
- R3. The "preparedness" posters developed by the Kern County Fire Department should be available for posting in public spaces, i.e. schools, libraries, Fire Departments and polling places, etc.

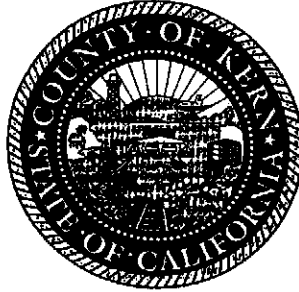
NOTES:

The William E. Whiting Communications Center and Emergency Operations Center should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review. Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury, and click on: Sign up for early releases. Present and past Kern County Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the Kern County Grand Jury website: www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury.

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**cc: FOREMAN
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**



1350 Norris Road
Bakersfield, California 93308-2231

June 24, 2013

The Honorable Colette Humphrey, Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, Ca. 93301

On March 21, 2013, members of the Health, Education and Social Services Committee of the 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury visited the Kern County Sheriff's Office Communications Center located within the William E. Whiting Communications Center at 2601 Panorama Drive Bakersfield, California 93306 per Penal Code 925 and 933. The committee members toured the facility with the section manager Lieutenant Bryan Armendariz. Based on their findings, the Grand Jury published a report that was made public on June 4, 2013. Below is the Sheriff's Office response to the 2012-2013 Grand Jury Final Report concerning the William E. Whiting Communications Center and Emergency Operations Center.

The Background/Facts section, item Q, of the Grand Jury's report stated the following:

- *Kern County Sheriff's Office Communication Center has 35 Dispatchers, six Supervisors and are rehiring six more Dispatcher positions previously lost due to funding.*

As a point of clarification, the Sheriff's Office would like to confirm the following information.

- *The loss of the six positions was actually attributed to attrition and not the loss of funding.*

The Sheriff's Office is appreciative of the Grand Jury's efforts in reviewing the operations of the Communications Center and for the associated recommendations.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. *Continue joint training between the Kern County Fire Department, the Kern County Sheriff's Office and the Kern County Emergency Operations Center.*

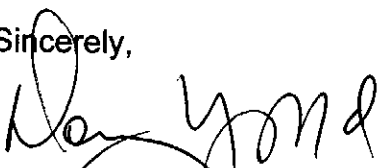
PLEASE ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SHERIFF

KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE RESPONSE

The Sheriff's Office agrees with the Grand Jury's recommendation to continue joint training between the Sheriff's Office, and the Kern County Fire Department Communication Centers, and the Kern Emergency Operation Center personnel. The Sheriff's Office will continue to participate in joint training exercises with these agencies.

In closing, the Sheriff's Office would like to thank the Grand Jury's Health, Education and Social Services Committee for taking the time to visit the Kern County Sheriff's Office Communications Center and for providing their insight and recommendations. The Sheriff's Office will remain committed to meeting the needs of the citizens of Kern County.

Sincerely,



Donny Youngblood
County of Kern

cc: Undersheriff RoseMary Wahl
Chief Deputy Francis Moore
Chief Deputy Shelly Castaneda
Chief Deputy Kevin Zimmermann
Chief Deputy Brian Wheeler
Clerk of the Board
Foreman-Kern County Grand Jury
Assistant CAO-Elissa Ladd

**WILLIAM E. WHITING COMMUNICATIONS CENTER
AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

Response to Findings:

The Board of Supervisors notes that the Grand Jury's findings are substantially correct.

Response to Recommendation:

R1. Continue joint training between the Kern County Fire Department, the Kern County Sheriff's Office, and the Kern County Emergency Operations Center.

The Kern County Fire Department and the Kern County Sheriff's Office recognize the importance of joint training and will continue to work with one another on the following activities: Incident Command, WEB EIC Integration, Interoperable Communications, and joint table-top exercises. The Fire Department and the Sheriff's Office will also research future joint training opportunities in order to provide the best possible service to the public.

R2. Hazardous Material Chemical Teams should be created due to the risks from the trains and semi-trucks traversing through Kern County carrying hazardous materials.

There are currently five Certified Unified Program Agencies ("CUPA") within the County of Kern. CUPAs are local agencies that are certified by the California Environmental Protection Agency to consolidate six hazardous materials and hazardous waste regulatory programs to improve coordination and consistency in enforcing these regulations in California. The County of Kern Environmental Health Services Department and the Kern County Fire Department are CUPAs that respond to incidents within metropolitan Bakersfield and across the County. The Bakersfield Fire Department, also a CUPA, primarily responds to incidents within metropolitan Bakersfield. Edwards Air Force Base and the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station both have their own CUPAs that respond to incidents within the Base or the Station. The CUPAs provide inspections, emergency responses to hazardous material events, health and environmental risk assessments and substance identifications. The Kern County Fire Department works closely with the other local CUPAs to ensure that the best possible emergency response is provided in all hazardous materials events including those events caused by trains or semi-trucks carrying hazardous materials. The Kern County Fire Department in cooperation with the other local CUPAs will continue to research methods of providing the same level of service, regardless of location, to all Kern County residents as well as funding sources to incorporate those methods.

R3. The "Preparedness" posters developed by the Kern County Fire Department should be available for posting in public spaces.

The Kern County Fire Department strongly encourages the utilization of material that promotes emergency preparedness. The Fire Department will continue to display this type of material within the Emergency Operations Center and will explore funding opportunities to create, print, and distribute similar material in public places.