

ADMINISTRATION, AUDIT AND COUNTY SERVICES COMMITTEE



Richard McCreedy

Amelia Rivera

Brad Aguilu, Chairperson

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Administration, Audit, and County Services Committee, pursuant to California Penal Code §925 is to:

- Review and report on County Departments and their officers in the management, performance, and execution of the County's fiscal responsibilities
- Observe, investigate, respond to, and report on citizen complaints regarding County Departments and Services
- Safeguard the public from misfeasance, malfeasance, and nonfeasance
- Recommend reasonable action to address related concerns of the community

The Committee's intent is to inform the citizens of Kern County of its findings, and to make a positive impact, through recommendations.

ADMINISTRATION, AUDIT AND COUNTY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Summary of Activities

REPORTS:

Kern County Department of Airports
Kern County Employees' Retirement Association
Kern County Parks – A Division of General Services
Kern Transit

VISITS/INSPECTIONS:

Black Sky – Emergency Preparedness
California Highway Patrol Headquarters
Camp Erwin Owen
City of California City
James G Bowles Juvenile Hall
Kern Council of Government
Kern County Employees' Retirement Association Meeting/Interim Director
Kern County Employees' Retirement Association Executive Director
Kern County Employees Retirement Association Board Meeting
Kern County General Services/Parks and Recreation
Kern County Information Technology Services (ITS)
Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission Board Meeting
Kern County Sheriff's Office Central Receiving
McFarland Female Community Reentry Facility
Ryan Alsop, County Administrative Officer

RECRUITMENT:

Kern County Home and Garden Show

KERN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AIRPORTS

“UP, UP AND AWAY”

PREFACE:

Meadows Field (BFL) is the primary airport of the seven airports that are under the authority of the Kern County Board of Supervisors and the Airports Director. BFL is located on 1,400 acres north of downtown Bakersfield. Kern County (County) has received a \$49.6 million grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) payable in three installments, for the purpose of BFL improvements. The remaining six airports in Kern County are utilized for agricultural, commercial, and recreational use.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Pursuant to Penal Code §925, the Administration, Audit, and County Services Committee (Committee) of the 2017-2018 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) inquired into the operations of Kern County Department of Airports.

PROCESS:

The Grand Jury investigated the progress of the reconstruction of BFL and the conditions of the six other airfields. The Committee interviewed the Airports Director and the Airport Chief Operations Officer. The Committee also inspected five of the remaining six airports under the Kern County Airports Director. Research of the BFL website and other internet sites also contributed to this report.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS:

In 1910, there were two airfields in Bakersfield. The most prominent airfield, was located at Sacramento and Monterey Streets, and was owned by the Kern County Chamber of Commerce. It was named Bernard Field and was run by the Pacific Aero Club. The airfield would be a stop for the United States Air Mail from 1923 to 1926. A second airfield was located on the Panorama Bluffs where Greenlawn Cemetery is presently located. In 1926, the Chamber of Commerce constructed and operated a new airport called Kern County Airport No. 1. The new site was at Highway 99 and Norris Road. The following year, it was moved one mile east. In 1935, the County of Kern bought the airport from the Kern County Chamber of Commerce. It was the only county-owned airport in the nation. In 1941, at the start of WWII, the United States Army Air Corps

began to build a control tower to train pilots; this location was called Meadows Field. This airport was named after Cecil Meadows, the County's first Airports Director from 1935-1957, except during WWII when he became an Army Air Corp pilot. He was instrumental in the county acquiring the airport.

- A. In fiscal year 2016-2017, there were 270,000 flights out of all Kern County airports. Cities served from BFL are San Francisco, California; Phoenix, Arizona; Denver, Colorado.
- B. The Airports Director is appointed by the Board of Supervisors, with an opened-end agreement.
- C. A \$49.6 million construction grant was obtained from the FAA to be paid out in three phases:
 - First phase was completed in 2016, at a cost of \$18 million
 - Removal of ten non-compliant taxiways
 - Construction of five new taxiways
 - Second phase is to be completed by November of 2017, at a cost of \$16 million
 - Reconstruct south 3,420 linear feet (LF) of runway, plus south blast pad
 - Replace approach lights system
 - Replace runway lighting system
 - Include new centerline
 - Include new taxiway designated zones
 - Remove eastern runway shoulder
 - Reconstruct 3,100 LF; east half of runway with shoulder
 - Remove two connector taxiways and construct one new replacement taxiway
 - Third phase, at a cost of \$15.6 million, will begin in April 2018 and conclude in November 2018
 - Reconstruct north 7,440 LF of runway including blast pad, eastern shoulder and remaining west shoulder
 - Install runway crown for water drainage
- D. The FAA requires Kern County to match 10% of the original grant funding (\$4.9 million), which was taken from the Airport Department Enterprise Fund.
- E. The William M. Thomas Terminal was opened in 2006. The Terminal has three enclosed sky bridges for loading and unloading airline passengers. Two additional sky bridges can be added without any further construction.

- F. A new flight training school, CAU, is located at BFL. The school is under the auspices of the California Aeronautical University, approved by FAA #141 rule, Pilot Certification and Qualification Requirements.
- G. Total BFL projected expenses for the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year Budget is \$9.4 million.
- H. The BFL revenue for 2017-2018 Fiscal Year Budget is projected to be \$17.6 million.
- I. United Airlines and American Airlines are the only airlines that service BFL.
- J. The workforce at BFL include:
- Airline personnel
 - Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Officers
 - FAA Controllers
 - Kern County employees
 - Private concession employees
- K. There are on-going discussions with Volaris Airlines and AeroMéxico Airlines to consider using BFL as one of their international flight destinations.
- L. In the event that international flights begin to use BFL, a United States Customs and Border Protections office is available to process incoming international flights, as needed. In addition, there is an isolated room for customs clearance.
- M. The Airport Chief Operations Officer provided a safe flight environment for over 200,000 aviation operations at BFL, during fiscal year 2016-2017.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The Kern County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) conducts their helicopter operations at the southern end of BFL. There is no other helicopter service available.
- F2. A Civil Air Patrol unit, the Bakersfield Composite Squadron 121, is stationed at BFL.
- F3. The upgrade of the BFL runways consists of new LED lighting, installation of new signage, new water drainage system, and lengthening the runway by 3,150 LF.

- F4. Kern County has six additional airports that are under the direction of the Airports Director.
- Taft (L17)
 - Wasco (L19)
 - Lost Hills (L84)
 - Elk Hills/Buttonwillow (L62)
 - Poso/Famoso (L73)
 - Kern Valley (L05)
- These are Visual Flight Rules (VFR) airfields, where individual pilot air traffic is the control. The heliport (CL61) at Kern Medical Center is also a Kern County entity.
- F5. Taft, Wasco, and Lost Hills County Airports have long term leases, which provide revenue for the Kern County Department of Airports into the Airport Department Enterprise Fund. The Elk Hills/Buttonwillow air strip is used by the Bakersfield Airplane Remote Control Society on a temporary agreement. A rally of remote controlled miniature aircraft was held on October 7, 2017. Poso/Famoso Airport is used for agriculture related flights using VFR. Prior to crop dusting operations at Poso/Famoso airport, permission is required from the Airport Chief of Operations.
- F6. The Kern Valley Airport is leased by the Kern County Department of Airports, from the U. S. Forest Service.
- F7. The old Meadows Field terminal is now vacant, and is not being used.
- F8. In the event international flights are diverted to BFL, there is an isolated area for customs processing.
- F9. The Kern County Fire Department operates Station 62 at BFL.
- F10. Most Bakersfield air passengers commute to the Los Angeles International Airport via ground transportation.
- F11. KCSO's helicopter flights are controlled by FAA flight controllers.
- F12. Un-manned Aircraft Systems (UAS), defined as drones, of a certain weight (0.55 pounds to 55 pounds), need to be registered with the FAA.
- The registration of UAS is controlled by the FAA, under Flight Rule #41, which states that UASs under 0.55 pounds do not need to be registered.

- F13. There are on-going discussions for resuming the Houston, Texas flights with the airlines that currently service BFL.
- F14. Day-to-day management of the Wasco Airport is provided by an agriculture crop spraying service.
- F15. BFL is one of two San Joaquin Valley's international airports.
- F16. Bakersfield is a convenient, centrally located transportation hub, with airline flights and railway connections to parts of California and the rest of the nation.
- F17. The west side of Taft Airport is leased by Skydive Taft, and they are responsible for the maintenance of vegetation around the tarmacs and runways; new maintenance equipment is needed. Contact was not made by the Committee with California Petroleum Services, the leasee on the east side of the runway.
- F18. The Taft Airport runway is configured in a southwest to northeast direction. All aircraft must land and take off using the northeast corridor to protect the City of Taft.
- F19. Skydive Taft coordinates maneuvers with the United States Army and the Swiss National Army, to perform night parachute drops around the Taft area, because of the similarities to foreign deserts. Skydive Taft offers therapeutic jumps for veterans suffering from PTSD.
- F20. The purchase of an additional 2.97 acres, for approximately \$162,000, is needed at the Kern Valley Airport. This purchase will provide a buffer area for a potential taxiway modification project.
- F21. While researching information for this report, the Kern County Department of Airports' website only provided information for Meadows Field. There was no information found on the County website pertaining to any of the other six County airports.

COMMENTS:

The Committee believes that the Airports Director of Kern County is making great strides in developing an airport that will be a huge benefit to the City of Bakersfield and Kern County for the future. The Committee thanks the Airports Director and the Airports Chief Operations Officer for their time and expertise during the inspection of the new runway construction zones.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. The Kern County Department of Airports should continue to plan improvements as needed for BFL. (Finding 3)
- R2. The Kern County Department of Airports should make plans to upgrade the other six airports, with particular attention to Lost Hills, Wasco, Taft and Elk Hills/Buttonwillow. (Finding 5)
- R3. The Kern County Department of Airports should have a budget line item that provides equipment to maintain the vegetation around the County airports' runways and tarmacs. (Finding 17)
- R4. The Kern County Department of Airports should ensure that their website contains current information pertaining to all County airports. (Finding 21)

NOTES:

- Kern County Board of Supervisors and the Kern County Department of Airports, should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public view at all seven Kern County Department of Airports locations.
- Persons wishing to receive an e-mail notification of newly released reports may sign up at www.kerncounty.com/grandjury
- Present and past Kern County Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the Kern County Grand Jury website, www.kerncounty.com/grandjury

RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS

**PRESIDING JUDGE
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 212
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**CC: FOREPERSON
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD CA, 93301**

Kern County Board of Supervisors
Response to 2017-18 Grand Jury Final Report
Kern County Department of Airports

Response to Findings:

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

Response to Recommendation:

R1: *The Grand Jury recommends the Kern County Department of Airports should continue to plan improvements as needed for Meadows Field (BFL).*

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation.

R2: *The Kern County Department of Airports should make plans to upgrade the other six airports, with particular attention to Lost Hills, Wasco, Taft and Elk Hills / Buttonwillow.*

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation.

R3: *The Kern County Department of Airports should have a budget line item that provides equipment to maintain the vegetation around the County airports' runways and tarmacs.*

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation.

R4: *The Kern County Department of Airports should ensure that their website contains current information pertaining to all County airports.*

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation.

COMPL_GJ Airports B

KERN COUNTY EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

Working on the Future for Kern County Retirees

PREFACE:

Kern County Employee Retirement Association (KCERA) is the Kern County public employee retirement system. KCERA was established on January 1, 1945, by the Kern County Board of Supervisors. The purpose of KCERA is to provide benefits for retirement, disability, death, beneficiary, cost-of-living, and supplemental retirement to the employees of Kern County, and participating Kern County special districts.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

The 2017-2018 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) Administration, Audit, and County Services Committee (Committee) inquired into the operation and management of KCERA, pursuant to California Penal Code §933.6.

PROCESS:

The Committee searched the internet, newspaper articles, and reviewed KCERA's publications:

- KCERA Board of Retirement By-laws and Regulations
- KCERA 2015 – 2016 Financials and audit reports
- New Employee Guide to Retirement Benefits
- Retirement Benefits Handbook
- Rules of Procedure for Disability Retirement

The Committee attended a KCERA Board of Retirement Meeting, an Investment Committee Meeting, and interviewed the Executive Director and staff.

All interviews and meetings were at the KCERA office, 11125 River Run Boulevard, Bakersfield, California.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS:

According to KCERA website: *“KCERA’s mission is to prudently administer retirement benefits, invest the assets of the Association, and provide quality membership services to eligible public employees, retirees and their beneficiaries.”*

Using professional consultants, KCERA manages \$4 billion of funded assets, with current liabilities of \$5.8 billion.

KCERA is a defined benefit pension plan (Plan). As a Plan, KCERA provides its vested members with a lifetime retirement benefit, i.e., pensions. Retirement benefits are formulated using the members total years of retirement service credit, age at retirement, and final average compensation.

- A. The Plan is administered by the KCERA Board of Retirement (Board), which consist of nine members and two alternate non-voting members. Five members constitute a quorum. Members of the Board include:
- 1 – Kern County Treasurer-Tax Collector (mandatory)
 - 4 – Appointed by the Kern County Board of Supervisors
 - 4 – Elected by the KCERA members to a three year term;
 - 2 General
 - 1 Safety
 - 1 Retired
 - 2 – Alternates, also elected by the KCERA members to a three year term
 - 1 Safety
 - 1 Retired
- B. The Board also holds separate meetings for its Administrative, Finance and Investment Committees, each consisting of four members. KCERA'S committees were formed to assist in the efficient administration, by making recommendations to the Board for approval, and are held on an as-needed basis.
- C. Elections are conducted by the Kern County Auditor-Controller's Office:
- Appointments to the Board may be made "in lieu of an election" if the candidate runs unopposed
 - Ballots are mailed to the member's last known address, no later than 15 days prior to the election
 - Each member votes for the nominee in the category in which they participate, i.e. general members can only vote for the general seat nominee, etc.
 - Ballots can be returned via mail or dropped off at the Kern County Elections Office
 - Information for elections is available via the member portal and the KCERA website
- D. The regular meeting of the Board is on the second Wednesday of each month. In accordance with the Brown Act, notices of meetings are published and posted through various methods:
- On the KCERA website (www.kcera.org)
 - Outside the KCERA office entrance
 - In print in the KCERA meeting room

- E. The Board is governed by the County Employees' Retirement Law of 1937, and subject to the requirements of the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013. KCERA is considered a "Governmental Plan," as defined in Section 414(d) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- F. The day-to-day operation of KCERA is carried out by the Executive Director who, with staff, manage the following areas:
- Administration
 - Retirement Services
 - Financial Services
 - Information Technology
 - Communications
- G. There are 15 agencies (Plan sponsors) currently enrolled in KCERA:
- County of Kern
 - Berrenda Mesa Water District
 - Buttonwillow Recreation and Park District
 - East Kern Cemetery District
 - Inyokern Community Services District
 - Kern County Hospital Authority
 - Kern County Superior Court
 - Kern County Water Agency
 - Kern Mosquito and Vector Control District
 - North of the River Sanitation District
 - San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
 - Shafter Recreation and Park District
 - West Side Cemetery District
 - West Side Mosquito and Vector Control District
 - West Side Recreation and Park District
- H. There are three types of members in KCERA:
- Active (General and Safety)
 - Retired
 - Deferred (ended employment with less than five years of retirement service credits)
- I. There are approximately 17,350 members of KCERA.
- 8,635 Active (General – 6,795, Safety – 1,840)
 - 7,824 Retired
 - 892 Deferred
- J. Contributions to KCERA come from three sources:
- KCERA members (from pre-tax earnings)
 - The employer
 - Investment funds earnings

- K. Employees of the County of Kern and Plan sponsors have mandatory participation in KCERA. Employees are enrolled into the Plan on the first day of the next pay period, following their entrance into eligible service.
- L. Employees are required to complete a Member Sworn Statement, to validate membership. This statement is used to calculate the contribution rate, retirement benefits, and to designate the beneficiary.
- M. There are exclusions from membership in KCERA:
- Extra help employees
 - Temporary help employees
 - Workers who work less than 50% of full standard hours
 - Fixed rate compensated employees
 - Written contracted employees
- N. New employees over the age of 60 may, in writing, waive membership in KCERA. This waiver, when signed and filed, is irrevocable and the employee is not able to join the Plan at any time thereafter.
- O. Members are vested in the Plan after five years of retirement service credit. Vesting entitles the member to receive a pension, after all eligibility requirements have been fulfilled.
- P. Members, both active and deferred, receive an annual benefit statement of account for their review. This statement includes:
- Date of birth
 - Service years
 - Retirement entry date
 - Designated beneficiary
 - Contribution balances
 - Estimated retirement benefit
- Q. As of May 2017, a member's Plan information can be accessed directly through the KCERA Member's Portal.
- R. Withdrawal from KCERA can be made upon termination of employment with the Plan sponsor, using the Disposition of Retirement Contribution Instructions form. The member can designate from the following dispositions:
- Refund: funds dispersed directly to the member with applicable taxes withheld
 - Traditional IRA rollover: with tax deferred funds to a bank or qualified defined contribution plan
 - Roth IRA rollover: eligible funds to a bank or qualified defined contribution plan with applicable taxes withheld

- Retirement funds to remain on deposit with KCERA, if less than five years of retirement credit
 - Deferred Retirement: elects to leave funds in KCERA and to defer retirement to a later date
 - Reciprocal Election: leaving funds with KCERA, if terminating with Plan sponsor and will become a member of a reciprocating sponsor with 180 days
- S. Seven qualifying benefit tiers are in place for Plan sponsor employees.
- T. Six retirement options are available for selection for retirees and/or beneficiaries. The final selection is irrevocable, after the first payment is issued.
- U. KCERA's monthly benefit payouts total \$29 million.
- V. Disability benefits may be applied for, if a worker becomes disabled and permanently unable to perform their usual job duties. KCERA requires proof of disability, supported with medical reports. The employee may be required to undergo an independent medical examination with a physician of KCERA's choosing. KCERA can also require that the former employee be examined at any time until age 55, to determine eligibility of continuation of disability.
- W. Employer policy could require transferring, reassignment, or job modification as an option for the employee, due to a disability. Wage compensation is to be equal to the position from which the employee is transferred, reassigned, or modified. KCERA must have a completed Disability Retirement Application on file, and must have accepted the application before this can be a considered option.
- X. Service connected disability benefit is no less than 50% of the employee's final average monthly compensation. There is no minimum service requirement for service connected disabilities, and in most cases, the benefits granted may not be subject to Federal and State income taxes.
- Y. Death benefits are assigned to the designated beneficiary of active and/or retired KCERA members. Members must have on file, a completed Beneficiary Designation form, listing the primary and any secondary beneficiaries. Provision is made for a separate one-time lump sum death benefit of \$5,000, for designated primary and/or secondary beneficiary. Provisions can also be made for minors or special needs adults for primary and/or secondary beneficiary.

FINDINGS:

- F1. Member participation is lacking in Board elections. The election held on June 20, 2017, resulted in 728 votes for candidates. Membership votes received, totaled only 5% - 10% of eligible members' votes being cast.

- F2. Members can sign up for access to the KCERA portal. The portal provides up-to-date information for the owner's account. Registering for a member portal account can be done at www.kcera.org. Currently only 2,774 members (15.9%) are registered as users of the membership portal.
- F3. Members, both active and deferred, receive an annual benefit statement of account for their review.
- F4. While attending Investment Committee and Board of Retirement meetings, the Grand Jury became aware that KCERA was considering transfers of \$70 million and \$50 million to new management funds. The Grand Jury did not find this information on the KCERA website or the member portal. The only place the subject appears was on the Board's meeting agenda, for discussion at the Board meetings.

COMMENTS:

The Committee would like to thank the Director of Kern County Employees Retirement Association and staff for their courtesy, professionalism, and cooperation extended during the site inspection and inquiry.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends that KCERA make a more concerted effort to encourage members to participate in Board elections. Using countywide@kerncounty.com and the members' email, KCERA should utilize email blasts, to remind members to submit their ballots. (Finding 1)
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends KCERA put greater emphasis on the need for members to be signed up with the members' portal. Using a friendly how-to video, and other online benefit information, could increase member's usage. (Finding 2)
- R3. The Grand Jury recommends KCERA mail quarterly or bi-yearly statements, to remind members to stay active and informed in planning their retirement. (Finding 3)
- R4. The Grand Jury recommends KCERA continue to inform members of all business, including investment funds. This could help encourage member's attendance at Board meetings, and other activities, i.e. elections. (Finding 4)

NOTES:

- The Kern County Employee Retirement Association 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.kerncounty.com/grandjury.
- Present and past Kern County Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the Kern County Grand Jury website: www.kerncounty.com/grandjury.

RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS

**PRESIDING JUDGE
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 212
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**CC: FOREPERSON
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

January 10, 2018

Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxtun Avenue, Suite 212
Bakersfield, CA 93301

On November 13, 2017 the Kern County Grand Jury published a report that was made public on November 16, 2017. The report was based on members of the Grand Jury attending Board of Retirement meetings and interviewing KCERA personnel. Below is KCERA's response to the 2017-2018 Grand Jury Final Report concerning KCERA's operations and management of the Retirement Plan.

KCERA would like to express its gratitude to the Grand Jury for its efforts in reviewing and evaluating the operations and management of KCERA. The independent review of the Plan by the Grand Jury serves to strengthen the trust between the community and KCERA.

GRAND JURY FINDINGS:

- F1. Member participation is lacking in Board elections. The election held on June 20, 2017, resulted in 728 votes for candidates. Membership votes received, totaled only 5% - 10% of eligible members' votes being cast.
- F2. Members can sign up for access to the KCERA portal. The portal provides up-to-date information for the owner's account. Registering for a member portal account can be done at www.kcera.org. Currently only 2,774 members (15.9%) are registered as users of the membership portal.
- F3. Members, both active and deferred, receive an annual benefit statement of account for their review.
- F4. While attending Investment Committee and Board of Retirement meetings, the Grand Jury became aware that KCERA was considering transfers of \$70 million and \$50 million to new management funds. The Grand Jury did not find this information on the KCERA website or the member portal. The only place the subject appears was on the Board's meeting agenda, for discussion at the Board meetings.

KCERA RESPONSE TO FINDINGS:

- F1. KCERA agrees with the finding.
- F2. KCERA agrees that the finding was correct at the time of the visit.
- F3. KCERA agrees with the finding.
- F4. KCERA agrees with the finding.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends that KCERA make a more concerted effort to encourage members to participate in Board elections. Using countywide@kerncounty.com and the members' email, KCERA should utilize email blasts, to remind members to submit their ballots. (Finding 1)
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends KCERA put greater emphasis on the need for members to be signed up with the members' portal. Using a friendly how-to video, and other online benefit information, could increase member's usage. (Finding 2)
- R3. The Grand Jury recommends KCERA mail quarterly or bi-yearly statements, to remind members to stay active and informed in planning their retirement. (Finding 3)
- R4. The Grand Jury recommends KCERA continue to inform members of all business, including investment funds. This could help encourage member's attendance at Board meetings, and other activities, i.e. elections. (Finding 4)

KCERA RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. Presently, KCERA mails a ballot in a clearly marked envelope to each member prior to each election pursuant to KCERA election procedures. The mailer provides detailed instructions for completing and submitting the ballot. In an effort to encourage greater participation in future KCERA elections, within the next six months, KCERA will evaluate additional methods of effectively generating greater voter participation, including communicating with plan sponsors and representative employee groups.
- R2. When the Member Portal went live in 2017, KCERA sent a special mailer to every member highlighting the features of the new Member Portal and instructing the member on how to register for the portal. In addition, there is a link to the Member Portal on every County employee's pay stub. Current member accounts now exceed 3,000. KCERA staff promotes the Member Portal at every KCERA seminar, one-on-one member counseling appointment, and through advertisement with the Retired Employees of Kern County (REOKC). KCERA is in the process of building its on-line library and

in the next six months, will explore adding additional content such as instructional videos for the Member Portal and other relevant topics.

- R3. KCERA currently sends out Annual Statements in conformity with the requirements of related statutes. KCERA does not believe that sending additional statements will promote member engagement, and would increase postage cost unnecessarily. In an effort to promote member engagement, KCERA recently began requiring all Retirement Seminar attendees to create a Member Portal account. KCERA will also promote awareness of KCERA and serve our members by presenting retirement related information to the Board of Supervisors and other Plan Sponsor Boards and will petition the County Administrative Office to reach out directly to Department Heads and Payroll Clerks throughout the County.
- R4. All KCERA business is conducted in conformity with its governing statutes. KCERA's website allows its members to stay informed about the actions of the KCERA Board of Retirement by signing up for KCERA electronic notification of agendas through the KCERA website. At this time, given the above and the fact that agenda items for action by KCERA's Board of Retirement are posted prior to every meeting in accordance with the Brown Act, on-balance KCERA does not find it to be a prudent or efficient use of its limited resources to separately single out routine business items (like investments) in the agenda for additional promotion on its website. However, KCERA will continue to use its website and quarterly newsletters to communicate its business and other content that may be of interest to the membership and the public.

KCERA would like to sincerely thank the Grand Jury's Administration, Audit and County Service Committee for taking the time to visit KCERA and providing their valuable insight and recommendations. It is the hope of KCERA that this information will assist the Grand Jury in its service to the citizens of Kern County.

Sincerely,



Dominic D. Brown
Acting Executive Director

cc: Board of Retirement
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Grand Jury Foreman

KERN COUNTY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DIVISION Keeping Ahead of the Game

PREFACE:

The Kern County (County) Information Technology Services Division (ITS) is more than your local computer tech nerd group. There are many unseen layers to ITS, from a basic user Help Desk, to Database Systems, Payroll, Taxes, Network Servers, County Websites, and the County's Telecommunications Network, just to name a few. All this, as well as keeping the County's entire network safe and secure.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

The Administration, Audit, and County Services Committee (Committee) of the 2017-2018 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) inquired into the operation and management of the Kern County Information Technology Services Division, pursuant to California Penal Code §925.

PROCESS:

The Committee researched the internet, intranet, newspaper articles, and reviewed publications. On March 22, 2018, the Committee interviewed the County Administrative Officer (CAO) at 1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, California. On April 26, 2018, the Committee interviewed the ITS Acting Division Chief and other staff in the ITS Building, 4175 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Bakersfield.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS:

Kern County Information Technology Services was a part of the General Services Division until January 30, 2018, when the Kern County Board of Supervisors (BOS) transferred ITS directly under the CAO as a major division. ITS provides a variety of professional information technology and telecommunications services to all County departments. ITS strives to provide cost-effective, efficient, and coordinated information and telecommunications services to all County departments, with a major emphasis on those departments that have direct interaction with the public.

The following information was provided by ITS:

- A. The primary information technology services include:
 - Providing 24/7 HelpDesk and systems support
 - Administering and supporting the following:
 - County Telephone System
 - County Enterprise Server

- County Criminal Justice, Property Tax, Payroll, and Financial Management Systems
- County Wide Area Network (WAN)
- Local Area Networks (LAN) for several County departments
- County email system
- County public website (www.kerncounty.com)
- County Intranet site (CountyNet)
- Providing departments with access to Internet services
- Developing and maintaining computerized business systems
- Coordinating multi-departmental automation projects
- Developing browser-based applications for the County Website
- Developing and maintaining Web page content for the County Website and CountyNet
- Creating and maintaining technology contracts

B. Depending on whether or not they have their own information technology section, ITS may provide some or all of these services to the Departments and Agencies:

- Anti-Virus Administration
- Applications Programming/Support
- Desktop Support
- Electronic Mail (email)
- File Server Backup
- Local Area Network (LAN) Administration and Support
 - 1,438 users on 6,800 Ports
- Enterprise Server Access and Support
 - 390 servers
- Operational Support
- HelpDesk
 - 1,206 tickets for incidents over the last 6 months
- Operational Production Services (OPS)
- Remote Access/Virtual Private Network (VPN) Administration
- Telecommunications Services
 - 13,747 phones
 - 3,226 Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) connections
- Web-Related Services
- Internet Access
 - 6 Wi-Fi Networks
- Website Hosting
- Web Application Development
- Website Development
- Wide Area Network (WAN) Administration and Support
 - 145 WAN links
 - 385 LAN endpoints

C. The following County Departments and Agencies receive full ITS services:

- Board of Supervisors
- Clerk of the Board
- General Services
- Parks
- Veterans Services
- Farm and Home
- Board of Trade
- County Administrative Office
- Human Resources
- Public Defenders Office
- Grand Jury
- Airports
- Agriculture Weights and Measures
- Animal Services
- Employers' Training Resource
- Development Services Agency

D. The following Departments receive limited services from ITS:

- Aging and Adult Services
- Assessor–Recorder
- County Counsel's Office
- District Attorney's Office
- Human Services
- Library
- Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
- Probation
- Public Health
- Treasurer – Tax Collector

FINDINGS:

F1. As provided by ITS, it is divided into five sections of management and duties:

- *Administrative*
 - *Fiscal: Payroll, Budget preparation and forecasting*
 - *Administrative: Support staff in Department policies, department correspondence, and agendas*
- *Database Systems*
 - *CJIS/Tyler(Odyssey): Law Enforcement Systems*
 - *KIPS: Property assessment used to assess public property*
 - *All mainframe systems have a back end database maintaining the input into the system*
- *APP/Web*
 - *General/Fiscal: Payroll, General Ledger, Time & Account coding system*

- *Web: Maintain 250 County owned web pages*
- *App Development: Maintenance FMS and budget*
- *Accela: DSA system used to maintain Code Compliance, Planning on public properties*
- *Enterprise*
 - *Telecom: Physical and VOP phone install and maintenance*
 - *Network: Backbone of County network and boundary devices*
 - *System Program: Hardware of mainframe maintenance*
- *LAN Services*
 - *Server/Desktop: Maintenance of virtual servers and desktop support for users*
 - *HelpDesk: Field calls from users, perform mainframe runs*
 - *GIS: Manage the enterprise mapping system*

- F2. One of the services ITS handles is the CountyNet, the County's intranet system, which is only available through a County connected computer system. CountyNet also provides the County's internal phone directory. ITS maintains the directory and performs updates. After researching the directory, the Committee found numerous errors in the latest version. The Committee was informed that updates to the directory are done on an as needed basis, when provided with the information from the Departments or Agencies.
- F3. When new computer systems are purchased by each Department or Agency, guidance is provided for those that do not have their own support. This practice seems to limit overall County standardization due to software licensing agreements. When computer systems are purchased on an as needed basis, it causes a County wide problem of multiple versions of operating systems and software. As an example, there are at least three different versions of Microsoft Office® currently being used in the County. This causes compatibility problems when collaborating on documents across different versions.
- F4. ITS is planning on updating and the standardization of all County web pages, thus making the websites mobile friendly, connected to social media, with community ties, and providing a County electronic presence. There is no timeline for this to be completed.
- F5. ITS is implementing Seamless Docs® to help the County reduce the need for hard copy paperwork throughout all departments. This will allow residents to complete documents from online services, including electronic signatures.
- F6. There are several Storage Area Networks (SAN) located at different sites throughout the County. The County is currently researching the purchase of additional SAN.

- F7. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is being consolidated in ITS within the LAN Services section. This consolidation of GIS will benefit the Kern County Fire Department, Public Works, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Kern County Sheriff's Office, and others.
- F8. The County is working with the City of Bakersfield on an agreement to share the city's high-speed fiber optic connection, to enhance internet and database capabilities.

COMMENTS:

The Committee would like to thank the County Administrative Officer, Information Technology Services Acting Division Chief, and staff, for their courtesy, professionalism, and cooperation extended during the site inspection and inquiry.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends that the Kern County Board of Supervisors, through the CAO, direct all departments to provide directory information to ITS in order to update the County phone directory, at a minimum quarterly, ensuring a current directory. (Finding 2)
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends that the Kern County Board of Supervisors consolidate all County computer purchases through ITS. This will allow the County to be aware of the lifecycle of all computer systems. This will give ITS the ability to purchase larger licensing agreements on software, at a reduced cost. This will make it easier to have consistency of operating systems, and other software throughout the County. (Finding 3)

NOTES:

- The Kern County Board of Supervisors, County Administrative Office, and Information Technology Services Division should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.
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**CC: FOREPERSON
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

Kern County Board of Supervisors
Response to Grand Jury Final Report
Kern County Information Technology Services

Response to Findings:

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

Response to Recommendation:

R1: *The Grand Jury recommends that the Kern County Board of Supervisors, through the County Administrative Office, direct all departments to provide directory information to Information Technology Services (ITS) in order to update the County phone directory, at a minimum quarterly, ensuring a current directory.*

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation to provide updated phone directories. ITS automated a process with a central tool to capture employee's name, position title, and office numbers from the payroll, phone station directory, and Auditor Net systems. The updated employee information was manually published to Office 365 and County Net Phone Directory in June 2018 and changes will continually be updated to keep current.

R2: *The Grand Jury recommends that the Kern County Board of Supervisors consolidate all County computer purchase through ITS. This will allow the County to be aware of the lifecycle of all computer systems. This will give ITS the ability to purchase larger licensing agreements on software, at a reduced cost. This will make it easier to have consistency of operating systems, and other software throughout the County.*

ITS continually reviews and evaluates the purchasing process and consolidates new contract agreements to identify opportunities to leverage current agreements and potentially reduce cost by negotiating discounts.



Kern County Parks A Division of General Services

A Place to Relax

SUMMARY:

The Kern County Parks Division (Parks) manages eight regional parks, 40 neighborhood parks, 25 public buildings, supervises three golf courses, and landscapes 76 County buildings. Parks include: veterans, senior, community and recreation buildings; group and individual campgrounds; fishing, boating and sailing lakes; a soccer park and baseball fields. Parks was originally a stand-alone Kern County Department known as Parks and Recreation Department, but was reorganized and combined into a Division of General Services effective January 13, 2017.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

The Administration, Audit, and County Services Committee (Committee) of the 2017-2018 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) inquired into the operation and management of Kern County Parks Division, pursuant to California Penal Code §925.

PROCESS:

The Committee searched the internet, newspaper articles, and reviewed publications. On November 29, 2017, the Committee attended a Parks and Recreations Commission (Commission) meeting, at the Kern County Administrative Building, located at 1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, California 93301. The Committee also interviewed the County Administrative Officer (CAO), General Services (GS) Interim Assistant County Administrative Officer, and other staff. Interviews were all conducted at the Kern County Administrative Building.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS:

Hart Memorial Park, dedicated in 1929, is one of the oldest recreational parks in Kern County, first named Kern River Park. It is a beautiful 370 acre public park located eight

miles northeast of Bakersfield. The park contains two lakes and three canals. The park had its start on November 7, 1921, when the County of Kern purchased land along the Kern River for \$20,673, for the purpose of creating a recreational public park. In the first few years, community groups donated time and money to the park's development, as the County did not allocate funds for the park. It wasn't until May 5, 1929, that enough work had been completed for the park to be officially opened to the public. That same year, the County brought in landscape architect Howard K. Gilkey, to help design the park's features.

During the Great Depression, donations for the park's construction slowed. The use of Works Progress Administration funds during these years allowed the Kern River Park to reach completion in 1936. Over the years, the park featured a plunge pool, bathhouses, zoo, small-gauge railway, and water wheel, all of which are no longer in use today.

In 1947, the park was renamed to honor John Oliver Hart, Kern County Supervisor and Chair of the Park Committee, who had been vital to the park's creation. Among some of Hart's projects to develop this park, he hired horticulturist Charles N. Potter, and created a tree planting program.

Hart Memorial Park has flourished and continues to provide the public with many opportunities for outdoor activities, including fishing, family picnics, and hiking. The park is also a habitat for kit foxes, raccoons, beavers, ducks, and additional wild life. The park also has a site best known as the "peacock house," because of the peacocks that live in the area surrounding the building, but it was originally named the Service Building for park rangers.

The Board of Supervisors voted to reorganize the department in late 2016. The Kern County Parks and Recreation Department was eliminated. The employees were absorbed by General Services, and moved from the former offices on M Street to the Kern County Administrative Center on Truxtun Avenue and other County worksites. This reorganization eliminated a Department Director position from the overall County budget.

Effective January 13, 2017, Parks and Recreation Department was reorganized as Kern County Parks Division, under the General Services Assistant County Administrative Officer, General Services Division Chief, Parks Division General Service Manager.

Although eliminated, Kern County Parks and Recreation Department continues to have a website and contact phone number, which can also be used for park reservations.

The Commission, established by Board of Supervisors Ordinance A-114 on October 20, 1953, pursuant to Chapter 4, Division 12 of Education Code, was revised by Board of Supervisors Ordinance G-858 of May 3, 1966; Ordinance A-358. The Commission acts as an advisor to the Board of Supervisors and to the General Services Assistant County Administrative Officer, in matters of policy.

- A. The website states there are 40 Parks having picnic areas, of which only 37 are listed:

<u>City</u>	<u>Name</u>
Bakersfield	A. W. Noon Park
Bakersfield	Belle Terrace Park
Bakersfield	Casa Loma Park
Bakersfield	Hart Memorial Park
Bakersfield	Heritage Park
Bakersfield	Kern River County Park - Group Picnic Areas
Bakersfield	Panorama Park
Bakersfield	Pioneer Park
Bakersfield	Potomac Park
Bakersfield	Rexland Acres Park
Bakersfield	Stramler Picnic Reservation Area
Bakersfield	Virginia Avenue Park
Bakersfield	Wilkins Park
Boron	Boron Park
Delano	Delano Memorial Park
Delano	Lake Woollomes
Derby Acres	Derby Acres Park
Fellows	Fellows Park
Ford City	Ford City Park
Frazier Park	Frazier Mountain Park
Greenfield	Greenfield Park
Inyokern	Inyokern Park
Kernville	Kernville Circle Park
Kernville	Riverside Park
Lake Isabella	Lake Isabella Park
Lamont	Lamont Park
Lost Hills	Lost Hills Park
Mojave	Mojave East Park
Mojave	Mojave West Park
Mountain Mesa	Mountain Mesa Park
North Edwards	North Edwards Park
Onyx	Scodie Park
Randsburg	Randsburg Park
Rosamond	Rosamond Park
Ridgecrest	Leroy Jackson Park
Valley Acres	Valley Acres Park
Wofford Heights	Wofford Heights Park

B. There are five parks that have group and/or individual campsites available:

<u>City</u>	<u>Name</u>
Alta Sierra	Greenhorn Mountain Park
Bakersfield	Kern River Campground
Bakersfield	Camp Okihi
Taft	Buena Vista Aquatic Recreational Area
Tehachapi	Tehachapi Mountain Park

C. Parks oversees the management of 17 County buildings serving veterans, seniors, community, and recreational needs throughout the County. These buildings, along with various other park locations, are also available for rental.

D. Kern County owns three golf courses, and Parks oversees the management of these courses:

- Buena Vista Golf Course
- Kern River Golf Course
- North Kern Golf Course

E. Parks oversees and manages Sam Lynn Ballpark, 17 other athletic fields, and four soccer fields throughout the County.

F. The Commission is made up of five voting members appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

There are two ex-officio members:

- General Services Assistant County Administrative Officer
 - or his/her designee
- A member of the Board of Supervisors
 - or designated alternate

Voting members serve four-year terms, and ex-officio members' terms correspond to their respective official tenure.

FINDINGS:

F1. After the reorganization into GS, and with the new leadership, Parks changed the way it functions. Part of the change is the way the Parks employees work with different functional areas within GS. Employees received training, when Parks and GS merged, that only supervisors submit work orders into the maintenance work order system, called MicroMain. This training is provided to new employees.

F2. Currently Parks, (listed as Parks and Recreation on the County website) maintains two separate websites. The current County website, www.kerncounty.com/gsd/parks/, provides general information on parks.

The other website, www.kerncountyparks.org, is for booking reservations for camping at the Buena Vista Aquatic Recreational Area, and ordering annual boat permits.

- F3. The Commission currently has a vacant position for District 2. The members for District 4 and District 5 are continuing to serve beyond their terms.
- F4. The Commission's website www.kerncounty.com/bos/boards/Park-rec.aspx is in need of updating. The minutes of Commission meetings have not been published on a regular basis.
- F5. The Kern County Museum is no longer governed by Parks. The General Services Assistant County Administrative Officer sits on the Kern County Museum Foundation Board.
- F6. Due to the workload, GS groundskeepers may only be able to service each park twice a month. With the new agreement between Kern County and the employees' union, Parks is considering contracting groundskeeping services for some parks in outlying areas, to help reduce the workload.
- F7. The County of Kern is currently exploring the feasibility of transferring some County parks in outlying areas to cities/districts that have their own parks department, and may be better suited to support these parks.
- F8. Kern County has an area of 8,161.42 square miles, with parks throughout the County. With limited personnel, Park Rangers are also responsible for security at some County buildings. However, the overall safety and security of Kern County parks falls to the Kern County Sheriff's Office and/or other local law enforcement agencies.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury would like to thank the County Administrative Officer, General Services Interim Assistant County Administrative Officer, and staff for their courtesy, professionalism, and cooperation extended during the site inspection and inquiry.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends that Kern County Parks Division updates and combines the two current websites, to better serve the public. (Finding 2)
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends that Kern County Parks Division establish a formal partnership with local law enforcement agencies to provide security and safety coverage for all parks. (Finding 8)

- R3. The Grand Jury recommends that the Kern County Board of Supervisors review and make the needed changes to the Commission's membership positions, in a timely manner. (Finding 3)
- R4. The Grand Jury recommends that Kern County Parks Division procure contracts for groundskeeping services for parks in outlying areas to reduce the workload on General Service groundskeepers. (Finding 6)

NOTES:

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Kern County Board of Supervisors
Response to Grand Jury Final Report
Kern County Parks

Response to Findings:

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

Response to Recommendation:

R1: *The Grand Jury recommends that Kern County Parks Division updates and combines the two current websites, to better serve the public.*

Kern County Parks Division uses a contracted third party to operate Camava, the reservations system used by the County. Camava cannot be combined with the County's Parks Division website, as they are not managed by the same group, but both Camava and Parks website have clear links to each other allowing the public to easily navigate between the two and find the information they need.

R2: *The Grand Jury recommends that Kern County Parks Division establish a formal partnership with local law enforcement agencies to provide security and safety coverage for all parks.*

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation.

R3: *The Grand Jury recommends that the Kern County Board of Supervisors review and make the needed changes to the Commission's membership positions, in a timely manner.*

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation.

R4: *The Grand Jury recommends that Kern County Parks Division procure contracts for groundskeeping services for parks in outlying areas to reduce the workload on General Service groundskeepers.*

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation.

KERN TRANSIT

A Partnership with Kern Council of Governments

PREFACE:

Kern Transit (the major bus service for Kern County) is under the Kern County Public Works Department. Kern Transit and the Kern Council of Governments (KCOG) are working together to reduce greenhouse emissions, as per California Senate Bill (SB) 375, and to provide transportation services for outlying communities in Kern County, now and for the future.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Pursuant to California Penal Code §925, the Administration, Audit, and County Services Committee (Committee) of the 2017-2018 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) inquired into the operations, management, and funding of Kern Transit.

PROCESS:

The Committee searched the internet, newspaper articles, and reviewed Kern Transit and KCOG publications. The Committee interviewed the Kern County Director of Public Works, and met with the Director of KCOG and staff.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS:

The Kern County Road Fund was established April 2, 1866. On March 26, 1979, the Kern County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the merger of the Road Fund with the Public Works Department. On July 1, 1992, upon Board direction, the Public Works Department was reorganized. Responsibility for roads, transit, and staff, were placed under the direction of the Resource Management Agency. The current Director was first appointed the Road Commissioner by the Board on October 11, 1994. Following another reorganization in July 2011, the Resource Management Agency was dissolved. The Roads Department and its Transit Division began reporting directly to the Board. The Roads Director's office is located on the fourth floor of the Public Services Building, 2700 M Street, Bakersfield, California, 93301.

- A. There were 17 fixed transit routes throughout Kern County. As of October 2017, one route was eliminated, and two have been extended to cover the eliminated route.

- B. Dial-a-Ride service is available to those who make prior arrangements, usually 24 hours in advance. Requests for service can be taken with shorter notices if time slots are available.
- C. Kern Transit has a transfer station in Lancaster, which provides a daily Metrolink connection to the City of Los Angeles.
- D. There are 27 communities in the unincorporated areas of Kern County that are part of Kern Transit.
- E. Operating revenues for Kern Transit comes from Sales and Use Tax for local transportation, State Public Transportation Modernization, and from the State Department of Transportation, section #531. Funding is also from the Transportation Development Act, State Sales Tax, Federal Transit Authority, other Federal money, and fare box receipts.
- F. Other sources of revenue:
 - 1. Charge for services
 - 2. Miscellaneous Income
 - 3. Capital Asset Sales
 - 4. Non-Revenue Receipts
 - 5. One time money
- G. The goals of the Organizational and Performance Measures are set forth in the 2017-2018 Kern Regional Transit Enterprise Funds budget.
 - 1. First goal is to promote public transportation with an expected ridership of 650,000
 - 2. Second goal is to ensure that bus service is to have an on-time performance of 90%
- H. Kern Transit, new title for the department, is a division of the Public Works Department of Kern County and provides a combination of demand-response, fixed-routes, and inter-city transit services.
- I. Twenty-five percent of the buses run on natural gas (NG). Seventy-five percent operate on hybrid diesel and unleaded gasoline. The diesel fueled buses are used for mountain stops, while the NG buses are for more level driving conditions.
- J. Primary expenses for Kern Transit, a Division of Public Works, include operating contracts for transportation services, labor, fuel, and vehicle repair.

- K. Of the Public Works Department's budget, \$2 million is allocated for labor and vehicle maintenance.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The bus drivers are not employees of Kern County. They are contracted by an outside company.
- F2. Currently, there is an AMTRAK station in Bakersfield. When the High Speed Rail system makes its way to Kern County, via Bakersfield, another train depot will be built.
- F3. KCOG is the umbrella organization which directs funding and planning for the transportation needs of Kern County and incorporated cities. KCOG requires planning for any future transportation needs.
- F4. The Bakersfield to Lancaster route, via Tehachapi, is the busiest for Kern Transit in eastern Kern County, for the convenience of shoppers, and easy access to medical services. There is currently no Central transfer station serving eastern Kern County. Due to a lack of public awareness, little is known about the routes available to Kern County residents.
- F5. Kern Transit works with Greyhound Bus Lines to accommodate passengers traveling from Ridgecrest to Mojave.
- F6. The Public Works Department has an Advance Planning and Grant Writing Division to seek funding for the Roads Department, Kern Transit, and Public Works. This Division also seeks funding for bicycle paths.
- F7. Kern Transit is responsible for the road surface repairs at most bus stops.
- F8. The newly implemented California Gas Tax Bill (SB) 1 is being challenged by voter groups, in an attempt to overturn the bill. This bill will provide a \$10 million revenue base that is needed to make necessary repairs on Kern County roads. Without this revenue, the Public Works Department is at a standstill.
- F9. There is a Metrolink connection with Kern County that originates in Lancaster. The bus fare from Bakersfield to Lancaster is \$5.00 one-way. The one-way fare for riders under 16 years of age and Senior Citizens over the age of 65 is \$2.50. The fare from Lancaster to Union Station, via Metrolink, to downtown Los Angeles, is \$11.50 one-way, \$23 round trip. The fare for Senior Citizens

and the disabled is \$5.75 for one-way, and \$11.50 round trip. An electric bus was donated by the Los Angeles County Transit District to Kern Transit, which helps provide Metrolink service from Mojave to Lancaster.

- F10. Mechanical repairs that need to be done on the NG buses are performed in an open-air environment, due to the possibility of explosions.
- F11. The major bus service in Kern County is Kern Transit, under the supervision of the Kern County Board of Supervisors and the Director of Public Works. Golden Empire Transit (GET) is a district which provides service for the City of Bakersfield. GET does not have a business connection with Kern Transit. GET Bus Line is under the authority of its own Board of Directors.
- F12. KCOG represents 27 cities and unincorporated communities in the outlying areas of Kern County. The ridership of Kern Transit from these locales, sustains the revenue needed for these routes. A Regional Planning Advisory Committee is made up two Board members from the Kern County Board of Supervisors and a representative from 11 other communities.
- F13. Kern Transit donated bus service for the Christmas wreath laying ceremony at the National Cemetery. This donation was a positive public service to help with parking logistics. According to Kern County Veteran Association website, this service was appreciated.
- F14. For the past ten years, \$46.4 million has been funded for 107.9 miles of pedestrian and bike projects in Kern County. Maintenance and upkeep are supplied by the Kern Transit, Division of Public Works.
- F15. KCOG is responsible for allocating necessary funds for roads and transportation needs in Kern County, as well as seven other counties within the San Joaquin Valley.

COMMENTS:

The Committee thanks the Director of Public Works, the Executive Director of Kern Council of Governments, and staff for their co-operation in providing information for this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends the Public Works Director continue applying for grant money to improve and create new bicycle paths in and around Bakersfield and Kern County. (Finding 6)
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends that bicycle and pedestrian paths in Bakersfield and Kern County continue to be inspected, maintained, and repainted with new signage, as needed. (Finding 14)
- R3. The Grand Jury recommends more Public Service Announcements to educate the community about Kern Transit. (Finding 4)
- R4. The Grand Jury recommends a centralized transfer station be built in Mojave, to meet the needs of eastern Kern County. (Finding 4)

NOTES:

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Kern County Board of Supervisors
Response to Grand Jury Final Report
Kern Transit

Response to Findings:

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

Response to Recommendation:

R1: The Grand Jury recommends the Public Works Director continue applying for grant money to improve and create new bicycle paths in and around Bakersfield and Kern County.

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation to continue to apply for grant funds. Public Works has expanded the Advanced Planning group and the group is now staffed with nine people who identify future projects, seek out funding sources, and prepare and submit grant applications.

R2: The Grand Jury recommends that bicycle and pedestrian paths in Bakersfield and Kern County continue to be inspected, maintained, and repainted with new signage, as needed.

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation that bicycle and pedestrian paths continue to be inspected, maintained, and repainted with new signage, as needed. The road maintenance crews and the paint and sign shop crew of Public Works will continue to make bicycle and pedestrian path maintenance a priority.

R3: The Grand Jury recommends more Public Service Announcements to educate the community about Kern Transit.

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation enhance Public Service Announcements to educate the community about Kern Transit. In addition to advertising in local publications, Kern Regional Transit will work with various community organizations throughout the County to provide information and give presentations about the availability of public transportation and how to use it.

R4: The Grand Jury recommends a centralized transfer station be built in Mojave, to meet the needs of eastern Kern County.

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation. Kern Transit is currently in the process of finalizing the plans for the Mojave Transit Center. Construction of the center is expected to begin this summer, with completion of the facility scheduled for spring 2019.