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Received

AUG 22 2007

Solano Cty. CAO

August 22, 2007

Honorable David Edwin Power
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Solano Superior Court
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

Re: Sheriff's Response to FY2006/2007 Solano County Grand Jury Report titled "Solano County Sheriff / Coroner's Office - Office of Emergency Services - Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center"

Finding 1 – The Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center and Office of Emergency Services are presently housed in an area where flooding occurs. Dispatchers must be able to perform their critical duties when any state of emergency arises.

Response to Finding 1 – The Sheriff's Office agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 1 – The Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center and Office of Emergency Services should be housed in an area that is physically secure and safe. This becomes critical when a disaster occurs.

Response to Recommendation 1 – The Sheriff's Office recognizes the importance of housing the Office of Emergency Services in a location that provides the maximum ability to respond in all disaster situations. While a location not subject to flooding would be ideal, this recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted at this time. The Department is working with the County Administrator's Office to explore options for an expanded Office of Emergency Services as part of the County's overall capital project planning process.

Finding 2 – The dispatcher job and pay classifications are included with the clerical employee classification within the county pay system.

Response to Finding 2 – The Sheriff's Office disagrees with the finding as the dispatcher job and pay classification is not aligned with clerical employee classification. The Public Safety Dispatcher job classification is an independent classification, unrelated to clerical positions within the County. The only area of commonality shared by Public Safety Dispatchers and clerical employees is with organized labor representation. Both are currently represented by SAGE/SEIU but are in separate bargaining units.

Recommendation 2 – The County should conduct a job function audit and evaluation of the dispatchers' positions. Their salary should be competitive with agencies elsewhere in the Public Safety environment.

Response to Recommendation 2 – The recommendation has been implemented as the Solano County Department of Human Resources has contracted with Fox Lawson to conduct a comprehensive classification and compensation study of all county job classifications. The Public Safety Dispatcher classification is currently under review.

Finding 3 – The County Dispatch Center is not able to communicate by radio with other public safety agencies in an emergency.

Response to Finding 3 – The Sheriff's Office partially disagrees with this finding. The Solano County Sheriff's Dispatch Center is able to communicate by radio with the majority of the public safety agencies in Solano County. Currently the Sheriff's Dispatch Center is unable to communicate by radio with two local agencies, the Vacaville Police Department and the Rio Vista Police Department. The Vacaville Police Department utilizes a system of radio frequencies that are incompatible with those radio frequencies utilized by other public safety agencies in Solano County. The Rio Vista Police Department contracts for services with another county, utilizing radio frequencies that are incompatible with Solano County radio frequencies. Once the first phase of the county-wide emergency radio interoperability project has been completed, a limited number of common radio frequencies will be available for emergency use county wide. Because the Rio Vista Police Department receives communication services from another county, it is likely their inability to effectively communicate by radio in Solano County will continue.

Recommendation 3 – A continued effort should be made to complete the additional five communications towers needed for the new communication interoperability system by June 2007 as scheduled.

Response to Recommendation 3 – The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but the first phase will be implemented as soon as the upgraded radio equipment is delivered and installed by the County's vendor. The development of the infrastructure necessary to support a county-wide interoperable radio communications system is continuing and the communication towers mentioned in the Grand Jury report are part of this planned infrastructure. Funding for the first phase of this project has been identified, contracts are in place and timelines for deliverables have been established. The contractor for this project is approximately 90 days behind in deliverables.

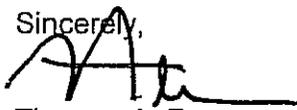
Finding 4 – At the time of our visit, the Solano County Office of Emergency Services had been working with the owners of radio station KUIK (95.3FM) to develop the capability to cut into regular programming at any time to make immediate emergency announcements to the public.

Response to Finding 4 – The Sheriff's Office concurs with the finding.

Recommendation 4 – Complete the ongoing negotiations with KUIK for this valuable public service.

Response to Recommendation 4 – This recommendation has been completed and the Solano County Office of Emergency Services now has the capability of immediately providing emergency announcements to the public by utilizing radio station KUIK.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Ferrara
Undersheriff

cc: Grand Jury
County Administrator's Office