

Kings County Grand Jury



FINAL REPORT
2000-2001

2000 – 2001 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

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COUNTY OF KINGS
GRAND JURY
P.O. BOX 1562
HANFORD, CALIFORNIA 93232

June 20, 2001

Honorable Judge John O'Rourke
Superior Court Judge
Assistant Presiding Judge
1400 W. Lacey Blvd.
Hanford, CA 93230

Judge O'Rourke

Presented to you and the citizens of Kings County, is the 2000-2001 Kings County Grand Jury Final Report. We, the entire Grand Jury, put forth our best effort to comply with our sworn duty in the best interest of the Citizens of Kings County.

As Foreman of the 2000-2001 Kings County Grand Jury, I am proud to have led the members who were an excellent cross section of persons representing the Kings County Citizens. One of our members passed away on 12-31-2000 and was really missed.

Few of the members had any idea that the Grand Jury would involve the great amount of time and effort to accomplish our duties. Once the members got started there was no stopping them until that task was finished.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU goes out to each of the following people for all of the time and assistance that they gave, so willingly, to this Grand Jury: Judge John O'Rourke, Kings County Board of Supervisors, County Counsel Denis Eymil, District Attorney Ronald Calhoun, his assistant Patrick Hart, Purchasing Manager Charles Wilson, Court Executive Officer Todd Barton and his assistants. We also thank the officials throughout the county for their cooperation and patience while we were conducting our business.

I SEND A THANK YOU TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE 2000-2001 GRAND JURY for their effort to comply with our sworn duty in the best interest of the Citizens of Kings County. We are proud of what we were able to accomplish this year.

Respectfully,



Carl L. Zimmerman
Foreman



Office of the Court Executive
Superior Court of the State of California
County of Kings

Todd H. Barton
*Court Executive Officer/
Jury Commissioner*

Jeff Lewis
*Assistant Court Executive
Officer*

Cindy Torres
*Manager of Courtroom
Services & Training*

Ivo Denham
Court Financial Officer

Krystina Cifuentes
*Manager
Civil/Small Claims/Family
Law*

Stephanie Cameron
*Manager
Traffic/Criminal/Juvenile/
Writs/Appeals*

June 19, 2001

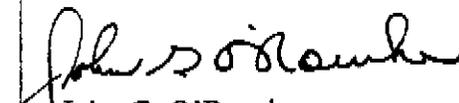
To: Kings County Grand Jury and Affected Governmental Agencies and Officers

The 2000-2001 County Grand Jury has submitted the enclosed reports to the Assistant Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in accordance with Section 933 of the California Penal Code. The enclosed reports were submitted and are hereby accepted as the final reports of the current Grand Jury concerning these areas of inquiry.

The agencies and elected officials who are affected by the enclosed reports are each hereby notified that they are required to comment to the Assistant Presiding Judge concerning these findings and recommendations as they pertain to the subject agency or elected official. Comments are due on behalf of each elected county officer or agency head who has the responsibility of the agencies and functions described in these reports within 60 days from the filing of the final report. The governing bodies of the public agencies affected by the reports have a 90-day time limit within which to submit comments pursuant to Penal Code section 933(c). Also, a copy of each response shall be placed on file with the clerk of the public agency on whose behalf the response is made. Those having questions concerning their responsibilities to respond to the Grand Jury's recommendations should contact County Counsel or their agency's general counsel.

The Judges of the Superior Court wish to express our deep appreciation for the dedicated efforts and uncounted hours of services given by members of the 2000-2001 Grand Jury, with special thanks to their Foreperson, Carl Zimmerman.

Sincerely,


John G. O'Rourke
Assistant Presiding Judge

Hanford Division
Civil/Small Claims
1400 W. Lacey Blvd.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211
exts. 2865 & 4838
Fax (559) 584-0319

Hanford Division
Traffic/Criminal
1400 W. Lacey Blvd.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 584-0362
exts. 4202, 4213, & 2436
Fax (559) 584-0319

Avenal Division
501 E. Kings Street
Avenal, CA 93204
(559) 386-5225
Fax (559) 386-9452

Corcoran Division
1000 Chittenden Ave.
Corcoran, CA 93212
(559) 992-5194
Fax (559) 992-5933

Lemoore Division
449 "C" Street
Lemoore, CA 93245
(559) 924-7757
Fax (559) 925-0319

COUNTY OF KINGS
GRAND JURY
P.O. BOX 1562
HANFORD, CALIFORNIA 93232

June 20, 2001

Kings County Board of Supervisors
1400 W. Lacey Blvd.
Hanford, CA 93230

Members of the Board:

As you may recall the 1999-2000 Grand Jury met with you to discuss the law that required that all Grand Jurors must be trained. During that meeting it was agreed that our training would be done in house the first full week of the new Grand Jury.

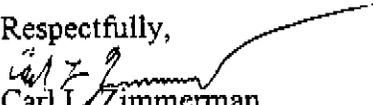
This law states that all Grand Jurors must be trained in a minimum of four subjects, which are civil duties, criminal responsibilities, interviewing and investigation techniques, and report writing. To send all nineteen jurors to a seminar would be too costly and the seminars do not take place until late August.

With the assistance of the county personnel this plan was carried out. The training started Monday with the County Counsel teaching us about the Civil Grand Jury "Watchdog" functions. On Tuesday the District Attorney instructed us on the Grand Jury's Criminal side and the possibility of criminal indictment hearings. Wednesday the District Attorney had his Chief Investigator give a class on investigation and interview techniques. Then on Thursday and Friday the Edit and Review Chairperson from last year's Grand Jury gave instructions on how to write Grand Jury reports. This met the requirements of the law. These sessions went approximately from 9AM to 11AM. We spent the rest of the morning reading the 2000-2001 Grand Jury Handbook. This system worked very well and the 2000-2001 Grand Jury recommends that this be continued.

The District Attorney let the Grand Jury use their Video Camera to record all of these sessions. Then when a member has to resign for whatever reason their replacement can get the required training by watching the tapes.

Let us state again that the 2000-2001 Grand Jury thanks you for your assistance and hopes that you will continue to have the training done in this way.

Respectfully,


Carl L. Zimmerman
Foreman

MEMBERS OF THE
2000-2001
KINGS COUNTY GRAND JURY

Carl L. Zimmerman	Foreman
Leroy "Lee" White	Foreman Pro Tem
Elizabeth J. Nail	Secretary
Eldora Trigueiro	Asst. Secretary
Joyce Heintz	Treasurer
Gary L. Jones	Sergeant-at-Arms
Quinton Ross	Asst. Sergeant-at-Arms

Teresa Barger

Nancy L. Blanken

Janet Bloyd

Mary Lou Chase

Jesse M. Espino Deceased 12-31-2000

Leon Garrone

Rhonda Hakker

Edith Howland

Robert Schaub

Dallas Schiewe

Leonard A. Silva

Barbara Smith

Philip Wintz

THE 2000 - 2001 GRAND JURY
DEDICATES THIS FINAL REPORT TO



Jesse M. Espino
December 25, 1925 - December 31, 2000
Jesse passed away while serving as our Sergeant-at-Arms
"A true American hero"



Hanford

Armona

Lemoore

County

Stratford

Government

Corcoran

Avenal

Kettleman City

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Agricultural Commissioner-Sealer
680 Campus Drive
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211 Ext. 2830

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
November 27, 2000
December 11, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The County Agricultural Commissioner-Sealer Department is a regulatory agency performing under the jurisdiction and direction of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR). The Department works in cooperation with various other federal, state, regional and local agencies. The Kings County Board of Supervisors appoints the Commissioner for a four-year term.

Within the CDFA is the Division of Measurement Standards (DMS). At the county level, the Agricultural Commissioner-Sealer Department consists of two divisions: Agriculture and Weights and Measures.

The primary goal of all county Agricultural Commissioners statewide is "To Promote and to Protect" agriculture. The number one industry in Kings County is agriculture. The promotion and protection of Kings County agriculture is accomplished through educational outreach and enforcement of county, state and federal ordinances by the department.

Historically, it has been the primary objective of Weights and Measures officials to insure that "Equity Prevails" in the marketplace. The Department enforces the laws and regulations of the Business and Professions Code of California and the California Code of Regulations. This enforcement protects and promotes the economy and commerce of Kings County.

FINDINGS:

The Committee met with the Commissioner at the facility located in the Agriculture Building in the Kings County Government Center. The Department budget is approximately 1.5 million dollars. Kings County almost passed the one billion-dollar mark in agricultural gross production last year. There are 25 full time employees and one half time computer employee.

The Commissioner is leading the effort to develop a statewide computer program to gather pesticide use information. Kings County is now the pilot county in creating and implementing this program for the entire state. The Kings County Commissioner's office

has a history of being the pilot county for various statewide programs. This office gets the first and the best computer equipment from the state because of these piloting programs. The Commissioner needs a permanent full time computer employee due to the work increase. The computer employee must be licensed by the state as an agricultural biologist inspector.

The Agriculture Department enforces state and federal agriculture laws involving the following:

1. Pest Detection: A proactive program to detect pests before they become established. Traps are monitored throughout the entire county for the presence of any exotic pests of agriculture.
2. Pest Eradication: Eradication includes the enforcement of a 90-day host free period for the Pink Bollworm, a serious pest to cotton. Another pest subjected to eradication is an aquatic weed called Alligator Weed, which can create problems in waterways.
3. Pest Management: Some of the common pests are squirrels, gophers and coyotes. This department is one of a very few in the state which produce vertebrate pest baits.
4. Exclusion: This includes inspection and quarantines to prevent bringing pests into the county and/or local pests leaving the county.
5. Pesticide Use Enforcement: Every aspect of pesticide use in California is monitored by this function, ensuring the continued availability and use of pesticide as these vital tools for agriculture while protecting the public, farm workers and the environment.
6. Seed Certification: Inspections are performed to insure purity, age, etc. This includes harvesting and handling equipment and the retail and wholesale establishments.
7. Nursery Program: The Agriculture Commissioner Department inspects the growing, propagation, production and sale of nursery stock to assure cleanliness from pests, true variety and healthy plants for sale.
8. Seed Inspection: Inspections for seed purity, germination and labeling are performed at retail and wholesale establishments.
9. Egg Quality Assurance Program: Eggs are inspected at retailers and packers in the county to enforce state and federal health, quality and grade standards.
10. Apiary Inspection: At the request of beekeepers or growers, the County Ag Commissioner inspects colonies of bees for strength and health to insure effective pollination. Also, part of this program is the Kings County Africanized Honeybee Committee.

As required by the CDFA, the Commissioner compiles and records an annual Agricultural Crop and Livestock Report. Also disasters to agriculture are surveyed and the information collected is used by other agencies offering disaster relief.

The weights and measures section of the Department inspects and tests all commercial weight and measuring devices throughout the county. Some examples are: gasoline

dispensers, various meters, odometers on ambulances, farm milk tanks, counter scales and truck scales. They are tested for accuracy and inspected to determine if they are appropriate for their intended use and, if in compliance, the inspector certifies the devices by affixing paper seals to them. There are approximately 3,500 such devices inspected in Kings County each year.

The weighmasters, who are licensed by the DMS to certify the weighed, measured, or counted quantity, makes sure all weight tags are accurate for truckloads of commodities. Persons that sell, rent, install, service or repair commercial weighing and measuring devices are required to be licensed with DMS.

The Assistant Commissioner told us that the Department now has pictures of Kings County taken by satellite through the Geographical Information System (GIS) and annual satellite maps of crops on the computer.

The Commissioner met with the Committee in Grand Jury Chambers on December 11, 2000 to clarify some information in this report. At that time, he explained the expansion presently taking place at his office. The library of hard cover books is gradually being converted to an electronic library, which will give access to more up-to-date information and will save space. The room can then be used as a work area. It is expected that the State Brand Inspectors will use this room for a local office. The lobby of the building is being remodeled to accommodate meetings and workshops.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Kings County Administrator should authorize a permanent full time computer operator for this department.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury found the Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner to be knowledgeable, organized and forthcoming. The atmosphere in the office was one of cooperation and harmony.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Alcohol and Drug Programs

Kings County Mental Health,
Alcohol and Drug Services
Kings County Deputy
Administrative Officer
1400 West Lacey Boulevard
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211, ext. 2377

Cornerstone Corporation
807 W. 7th Street
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 583-2035

Kings View Community Services
289 E. 8th Street
Hanford, CA 93230
(599) 582-9307

Kings View Counseling Services
1363 Bailey Drive
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-4481

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Interview and Tour
January 8, 2001
January 29, 2001
February 5, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Cornerstone Community Alcohol and Other Drug Recovery Systems (CRS) is a residential program established in Hanford in 1990. CRS is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to provide alcohol and drug recovery services to residents of Kings County. There are beds for 18 men and 14 women in two separate homes. The women can bring children with them. There are six openings for female day participants from 9:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

Kings View Corporation has provided two separate service programs in Kings County since 1964. Kings View Community Services is focused on outpatient treatment for alcohol and other drug addictions. Kings View Counseling covers comprehensive mental health services.

Each of these programs, one with CRS and two with Kings View, is contracted by Kings County through the Administrative Office. The 2000-2001 budget adopted for mental health is \$5,059,319 and for alcohol and other drug recovery is \$1,243,880.

FINDINGS:

The Committee interviewed a Deputy County Administrative Officer in Grand Jury Chambers January 8, 2001. That interview, along with a subsequent memo, produced the following information:

Kings View Community Services for Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) provides programs tailored more for education/intervention groups focused on addictions. Most of the clients are ordered to attend by the Courts, which require written reports updating each person's progress.

Kings View Counseling Services offers outpatient mental health care in Hanford, Corcoran and Avenal. It has a professional staff to counsel, diagnose, and treat consumers of mental health services. All Kings County residents are eligible for clinical services for mental health care.

Kings View Corporation is funded through a county contract using Federal and State dollars, insurance, Medicare, MediCal and clients' private funds.

Most participants in these programs have problems with mental health and alcohol or drugs at the same time. The newest method of funding for these clients is special grants that pay for both types of services. CalWorks (the Welfare-to-work Program) is supplying about \$500,000 in the fiscal year 2000-2001 to fund both AOD and Mental Health (MH) services. Keeping the participants in one place with one case manager provides more structure to support the participants.

To prevent out-of-home placement for high-risk children, another new grant program, Children's System of Care, provides children of age 12 to 18 years, with intensive services. In most situations home is the best environment for children, so keeping treatment focused on supporting the child and the family is essential. The Children's System of Care receives approximately \$350,000 each fiscal year.

In June 2000, an additional staff position was added at Kings View Counseling Services to give counseling to adults and juveniles incarcerated in local detention facilities. The program was implemented to provide the same treatment structure to persons in jail or the Juvenile Center as they would receive in an outpatient clinic or in the Cal-Works Program (treating mental health and alcohol and drug addictions with the same staff in the same place).

For mentally ill offenders in jail, several changes in service are underway or planned. A planning grant was received to help Kings County explore new opportunities for treating mentally ill offenders. The Sheriff, District Attorney and Kings County Administrators have been developing a process which would screen new prisoners for alcohol and other drug and mental health issues before booking them into jail. Offenders assessed to have mental health issues would be transported directly to a psychiatric facility to obtain help. Jail inmates would be provided with AOD and mental health clinic phone numbers upon release, as well as phone numbers and web site addresses where they can obtain further information. The inmates who sought and received services in jail would be contacted after release to see if they are following up with AOD and MH services.

Cornerstone Corporation

Cornerstone provides a place for addicts to live away from the environment which contributed to their addictions while undergoing rehabilitation from drugs and alcohol. No drugs or alcohol are allowed, and the client being treated must leave if he or she is found to be using them.

The Committee made an unannounced tour of the Cornerstone Facility on January 29, 2001. The Women's Service Manager informed us that they had the maximum allowable number of women (14) in residence plus some day participants. Treatment varies in length according to the person's need; usually it is 90 days. Participants are referred by Child Protective Services, the Probation Department, Parole Officers and family members. Occasionally, clients refer themselves.

The Committee did not interview any female residents because they were in group therapy. The Manager told us that the women clean their personal living areas, as well as the community areas. They also do all the cooking. The Committee observed that the entire area, including the kitchen, was spotless. The beans cooking at the time smelled delicious.

On the same day the Committee also made an unannounced tour of the men's facility. The Service Manager said it was filled to capacity and had about 15 men on a waiting list. The first 30 days of residence must be spent at the facility without visitors or phone calls. After the 30 days, if they earn passes, they can leave for visits, shopping, or other tasks for one and one-half hours on weekdays or eight hours on weekends. The same privileges apply for the women.

There were a few male residents in the kitchen and the patio areas. The personal and shared areas, including the kitchen, were spotless. The residents were respectful and courteous in conversation with members of the Committee.

Kings View Corporation

The Committee made an unannounced tour of the Kings View Community Services Facility for Alcohol and Drug Abuse. We interviewed the Lead Counselor, who informed us that there were four levels of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) state mandated programs.

They are:

1. Wet reckless driving – six week program
2. First offender – four month program
3. First offender who refused blood or breath test or is above .2 percent blood alcohol content - six month program
4. Multiple offender - 12 and 18 month program.

The clients must pay for the programs before they can get their driver privileges reinstated. There are no State or County funds used for these programs.

The Alcohol Drug Education and Counseling (ADECC) program uses Federal, State and County funds. Although the clients are charged a fee for the services, none are turned away for lack of funds. There are 18 full time staff, some for DUI and some for ADECC.

The Lead Counselor explained that the Hanford office is open Monday through Friday for both ADECC and DUI. He stated that these programs serve about 500 persons per month, 100 in ADECC and 400 in DUI. He believes they could serve another 100 clients by opening on Saturdays. (The Corcoran office is open Monday and Wednesday for DUI and Tuesday and Thursday for ADECC. The Avenal office offers ADECC only and is open Wednesday and Saturday).

The Committee made an unannounced visit at the Kings View Mental Health Counseling Facility and interviewed the Executive Director. The program has a staff of about 100. Funding comes from Kings County with some State and Federal grants. There is a sliding scale for counseling fees based on ability to pay. Some fees are paid from insurance, MediCal and Medicare. Clinics in Hanford, Avenal and Corcoran are responsible for about 2,500 open cases involving adults and children on an outpatient basis. If a client needs to be hospitalized for mental health reasons, a search must be made throughout the state for a bed because beds for mental health patients are so scarce. In addition to limited hospital space there are some board and care homes and apartments for mental health patients.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

All personnel interviewed were professional, personable and enthusiastic about their work.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

General Services
County Government Center
1400 West Lacey Blvd.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211, ext. 2713

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Interview
March 12, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

General Services was created by combining the two formerly separate budget units for Purchasing and Central Services into one budget and making it a division of the Administrative Office. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, General Services was combined with the Auditor-Controller Office.

General Services has two functions, Purchasing and Central Services. Purchasing is responsible for procurement of all materials and supplies for county departments. It also receives, audits and prepares claims for payment of invoices, maintains central fixed asset inventory records and handles disposition of surplus county property. Central Services is responsible for printing forms and other materials for county departments, processing United States and interoffice mail, and reproduction of county maps for the public. Six employees are authorized for the division.

FINDINGS:

The Committee interviewed the Purchasing Manager in the Grand Jury Chambers on March 12, 2001. The main function of Central Services is to secure goods and services for Kings County. The Purchasing Manager tries to save money for the County on all expenditures, especially costly items. The Manager receives bids on contracts for construction, but is not involved in accepting them. As much as possible, an effort is made to use local businesses for purchases. The Manager said County bills are paid quickly compared to other counties.

In Fiscal Year 1999-2000 the workload included:

Purchase Orders Processed	7,200
Payments Processed	14,000
Outgoing Mail	1,250,000
Copies (Offset and Photocopy)	6,800,000

Surplus property is disposed of by sale or sent to the land-fill. A proposal has been made to turn over outdated computers to the Kings County Office of Education for the Regional Occupational Program so students can disassemble them and learn the inter-workings of a computer.

Central Services also serves the City of Hanford and a few other entities. They are charged at the same rate as the County, with County work taking priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury found the Purchasing Manager to be accommodating and efficient.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Chemical Waste Management Inc.
Kettleman Hills Facility
35251 Old Skyline Road
Kettleman City, CA 93239
(559) 386-9711

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
April 4, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

A hazardous waste plant was opened in the Kettleman Hills in 1972. In 1979 the plant was purchased by Chemical Waste Management, Inc. This central location was chosen because of the geological feature of the soils and bedrock with small amounts of ancient non-potable salty water deep in the ground trapped between the rock strata. Any leaching of the hazardous waste material would also be trapped, away from any potable water. However, all areas for disposal are thoroughly lined and no leachage is expected.

The purpose of Kettleman Hills Facility is to dispose of waste, including hazardous waste, while protecting and enhancing the environment under strict policy and procedure guidelines. There are about 90 employees. There are several similar sites around the central and southern parts of California with this facility having the highest volume of use.

The Facility accepts almost all types of hazardous waste. The only materials not accepted for disposal are radioactive waste, infectious material, forbidden and class A explosives, and compressed gasses. There are numerous types of treatment including landfill, solar evaporation, drum and bulk storage, stabilization, solidification and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) drain and flush, storage and solid landfill.

FINDINGS:

The Committee met with the District Manager of Kettleman Hills Facility and was given an interview and tour of site operations. During the interview the Manager stated that tours are strongly encouraged and conducted for such groups as schools, media, government officials and others.

The facility encompasses 1600 acres surrounded by a three-strand barbed wire fence. Active units are surrounded by a chain link fence. The chain link fence is specially constructed to keep wild animals out of the hazardous waste area. No liquids escape from the facility; even rainwater is trapped and, if tests prove the water to be safe, it is used to keep the dust down during summer. Kettleman Hills Facility maintains an on-site laboratory staffed with a full-time chemist and lab technicians capable of conducting most tests required for waste approval, incoming waste analysis and post-treatment certification testing. There is twenty-four hour, seven days per week security.

On tour, the Committee saw vast areas of black plastic covering materials forming a large hill. This plant receives about 800 to 8,000 tons of waste per day. We observed several units such as burial units for hazardous and non-hazardous waste materials, a container storage area, the encapsulation unit and evaporation ponds. All the holding areas are lined to prevent leaching of any kind into the ground. Employees outside of the office, including the truckers bringing in waste, were wearing safety gear. At the time of our visit, this facility had 388 days without a serious injury.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury was pleased to observe the meticulous care taken to protect the environment and abundant wildlife during the daily operations.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kings County Information Services
County Government Center
1400 West Lacey Blvd.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211, ext. 2550

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Interview and Tour
March 5, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Information Services' mission is to provide management resources and services to county departments and selected public agencies within Kings County. Major activities include the selection, acquisition, installation, maintenance and support of Local Area Networks and Wide Area Networks (LAN/WAN) and computers; the selection/development, implementation, and support of county business application systems; telephone system support; and management of the County's central microfilming and records storage. The Information Services Department is operated as an Internal Service Fund, recouping expenses by charging county departments and other agencies for the cost of the service. These support services are provided through four major units: Operations, Technical Support, Systems and Programming, and Central Microfilm and Records Storage.

The countywide conversion to Ethernet, a type of network architecture that connects all county computers to email, Internet and other departmental applications, was recently completed for expanded communications. Other major projects included installing "multi-agency" in-car laptop computer systems in the Sheriff Department's patrol cars for report writing capability in the field, Human Service's "back-to-work" program and upgrading the county's telephone system.

FINDINGS:

The Committee met with the new Information Services Director in Grand Jury Chambers to follow up on the recommendations of the 1999-2000 Grand Jury. Major concerns mentioned in that report were getting requested work done in a timely manner and explaining how bills for computer services are figured. The Director explained the newly instituted system for tracking problems. It consists of a Help Desk providing immediate assistance for computer problems and, if necessary, scheduling service. Approximately 50 percent of the problems are resolved by telephone. If the problem cannot be resolved, a work order is entered. Problems are resolved that day if possible. A report is generated daily indicating what was done, the amount of time spent and identifying training necessities.

While specific charges are not noted on statements at the present time, the statements may be modified later to include them. All billing detail can be printed out and supplied to departments if requested.

The Director is striving for an efficient first-rate facility. The Department now responds to problems, but the Director would like to be able to anticipate problems. Computer files are backed up almost daily. Establishing an off-site computer system in case of a disaster is not feasible at this time due to budget constraints.

The Director would like three new positions approved. There is need for an additional person for the Help Desk, a Researcher or Business Analyzer and a Supervisor for Programmers. The Director stated Kings County is a leader in technology statewide and Kings County Information Services should be able to help bring business to the County.

Following the interview we walked over to the Information Services Department and toured the office. The office includes one programming analyst area, a training center, a large tape library and a computer room. There is off-site storage for tapes at Central Microfilm.

Upon reviewing the 1999-2000 Grand Jury Report, the Committee found that the recommendations have been implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Investigate the possibility of creating three new positions as stated by the Director.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury is pleased to report that services and responses to problems have improved.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kings Waste and Recycling Authority
7803 Hanford-Armona Road
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 583-8829

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
March 26, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

The Kings Waste and Recycling Authority (KWRA) was formed in 1989 as a Joint Powers Authority (JPA). This JPA was formed to allow a regional approach to comply with California Assembly Bill 939, the California Waste Management Act, which requires that all California counties reduce the amount of raw garbage going into landfills 25 percent by 1995, and 50 percent by 2001. The cities of Hanford, Lemoore, Corcoran and the County of Kings make up the JPA. Some other areas of Kings County are not members of this authority but do participate in Kings Waste and Recycling Authority's School Bin Recycling Program.

FINDINGS:

The Committee interviewed the Executive Director at the Material Recycling Facility (MRF) then toured the facility. The 94-acre MRF is open seven days a week for garbage delivery. City garbage is collected Monday through Friday and delivered to MRF. Most of the materials to be recycled are delivered to a sorting area, which consists of 90,000 square feet under roof. The public can bring garbage to the facility seven days a week. However, garbage is processed only five days a week. Garbage trucks enter MRF and deposit garbage on the floor as directed. The trash is moved into pits at the base of conveyer belts, which move it through recovery stations, where all recyclables are removed and sorted by type. There are two conveyer belts; four workers on each side of each belt pick out the recyclable material and put it into bins. The sorted items are then baled and stacked ready to be sold. Money received from these items is essential to the MRF operating budget. There are 58 employees.

Green waste, including leaves, weeds and grass clippings, small tree limbs and small pieces of wood, without glue, nails or paint, are shredded by machine and aged until ready to be used as compost. The compost is inspected regularly to insure that it heats naturally to 130 degrees for 15 days. The high temperature is needed to kill seeds and most disease causing agents. Kings County residents can purchase compost at \$15.00 per cubic yard for screened and \$10.00 per cubic yard for unscreened. At the time the Committee toured the facility, KWRA was running a sale of compost for \$10.00 screened and \$8.00 unscreened.

Oil, paint, solvents, car and household batteries, and similar toxic materials can be turned in at MRF the first Saturday of each month. There is no charge for this service. Kings County residents are entitled to five quarts of re-refined oil free when they bring in used automotive oil to MRF.

The Executive Director stated that he wishes more people would take their recyclables to the School Bin Recycling Program because the materials are cleaner and require less time to sort than those received from the garbage pickup. Schools benefit from this program by receiving 20 percent of the profit. He also stated that county and local officials must support and enforce this program if it is to be successful.

Although a few businesses recycle, most make no effort to do so. The Committee feels that it is time for some of the promised penalties to be imposed. Also, illegal dumping is a major problem, though it is seldom policed. If the 50 percent landfill goals are not met on or before 2005, the JPA will be faced with a \$10,000 per day fine until the goal is met. That figure will translate to an additional minimum cost of \$20.00 per month on the garbage collection section of each customer's utility statement.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Board of Supervisors and officials in the cities of Kings County should support recycling programs before the consequences of failing to do so hits us in the pocketbook.
2. Make Recycling for apartment complexes and businesses mandatory.
3. Enforce recycling ordinances.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury thanks the employees of KWRA and those people who do recycle. We hope more citizens of Kings County will get into the spirit of recycling before time runs out.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kings County Library System
Hanford Branch Library
401 North Douty Street
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-0261

Lemoore Branch Library
457 C Street
Lemoore, CA 93245
(559) 924-2188

Corcoran Branch Library
1001 Chittenden Avenue
Corcoran, CA 93212
(559) 992-3314

Avenal Branch Library
501 East Kings Way
Avenal, CA 93204
(559) 386-5741

Armona Community Library
11115 C Street
Armona, CA 93202
(559) 583-5005

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Interviews and Tours
August 7, 2000
August 24, 2000
September 7, 2000
September 25, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The Kings County Library System provides library service through its seven branches located in Avenal, Armona, Corcoran, Stratford, Lemoore, Hanford and Kettleman City. The Kings County Library and the Armona Elementary School District share responsibility for operating the Armona Community Library.

The proposed library budget for 2000-2001 is \$1,172,767. The Kings County Property tax is the only consistent source of income for the library. Additional funding comes from one-time grants, fines, fees and other sources, such as the Friends of the Library. The Kings County Library does not receive funding from the County General Fund. The book budget in 1990-91 was \$70,000 and, to this day, it remains about the same. The Kings

County System ranks 31st out of 32 libraries in our size category in California for library spending. The Kings County Library employs 15.7 people for all seven branches.

The Kings County Library has a web site at www.sjvls.lib.ca.us/kings. The library catalog is available on-line from a link on the Kings County Library's home page. Patrons can search the catalog, as well as an on-line collection of magazine indexes with full text articles, from their web browsers at home. The addition of special interest materials, such as books on tape, Spanish-language books and videos are now available.

FINDINGS:

The Committee met with the Deputy County Librarian on August 24, 2000 to be briefed on the operation of the Kings County Library system, tour the Hanford Branch Library and follow up on the recommendations of the 1999-2000 Grand Jury. The Committee returned on September 25, 2000 to interview the new County Librarian. We were given a tour of the climate-controlled basement filled with neatly arranged shelves of reference material and videos that are available to the public on request. There is a separate storage area for supplies.

The Gates Foundation computer grant applied for in 1999 has been implemented with the delivery of 37 new computers. The Gates computers have been distributed to the seven library branches for use by the public. The Foundation provided advice, training and money for the installation of the computers and upgrade of existing electrical wiring to support them.

Hanford Branch Library

The 1999-2000 Grand Jury made the following recommendations for the Hanford Branch Library:

1. Replace the carpet and upgrade shelving to meet earthquake standards.
2. Upgrade the library to be fully handicapped accessible.
3. Implement a more efficient floor design.
4. Improve lighting.

Upon entering the Library the Committee found the lighting much improved with the replacement of fluorescent tubes in the ceiling fixtures. Shelving that is 60 inches or higher is not bolted to the floor; this does not meet California earthquake standards. The carpet has not been replaced. These two recommendations need to be implemented at the same time to save money. The Librarian has requested money from the Board of Supervisors for this project.

The Hanford Branch Library has a computer laboratory set up for staff training and programming of all the computers in the system. The Hanford Branch Librarian demonstrated the capabilities of the new computers. He told us that this lab will eventually be open to the public with one hour free computer lessons available.

This library serves approximately 250 people per day. Thirty to thirty-five percent of the books checked out are children's books.

The Deputy Librarian explained to us that, while the library has facilities for children and children are welcome, it is not a place to leave children unattended. Parents often leave children as young as five years old for long periods of time expecting the library staff to baby-sit them. The Librarian is working with the County Counsel to solve this problem.

In the men's restroom there is a recessed electrical panel containing telephone wires. The door to this panel is broken and can not be closed. The Grand Jury is concerned that it may be a hazard because it is within reach of children.

Lemoore Branch Library

The 1999-2000 Grand Jury made the following recommendations for the Lemoore Branch Library:

1. Make current restrooms fully handicapped accessible and available for patron use.
2. Pursue avenues of funding to expand or relocate the Lemoore Branch.

The Committee toured the Lemoore Branch Library on August 24, 2000. We observed several problems before entering the building, which is shared with Lemoore Municipal Court. We found the exterior particularly unappealing. Grime, faded paint and spider webs laden with dust covered the front of the building. Parking is limited, especially on days when court is in session. The library assistant later told us that visitors to the library sometimes have to park as far as a block away.

The interior of the library was inviting, attractive, well organized and well maintained. The lighting was good. In addition to the computers donated by the Gates Foundation, there are four computers and desks for children's use donated by a local family. All available space is utilized for shelves, tables and chairs. Every shelf is filled with books or magazines. There is no room for expansion in this building. This is the second busiest library in Kings County, serving approximately 100 people a day.

The shelving is not bolted to the floor and does not meet California earthquake safety requirements.

Restrooms are handicapped accessible and shared with the Court. To reach them library patrons must go through a door directly into the Court lobby. This presents a hazard for children to be out of sight in such an environment. There is a small courtroom south of the library which is not in current use. Perhaps a portion of this courtroom could be sectioned off to be used as restrooms for the library.

Corcoran Branch Library

The Committee interviewed the part time Library Assistant and toured the Corcoran Branch Library on August 7, 2000. (The full time Library Assistant was out on medical leave.) We were impressed with the library. The exterior of the building was appealing, clean and well maintained. The interior was spacious, well lit, clean and very well organized, even the storage area. Approximately 30 children and the same number of adults visit the library each day. There was a small Spanish section and a few books with large print. The furniture and carpet were in good condition and there was an attractive children's display with a generous selection of books and room for more. The shelves are bolted and braced to the floor, which meets the California Earthquake Code. We did notice several small deficiencies that need to be taken care of. There are ceiling tiles stained by water from a leaky roof. The roof has been repaired, but the tiles need to be replaced. There is a slow leak in the drinking fountain that needs immediate repair. The men's restroom has a small hole in the wall that needs to be repaired so it does not deteriorate further.

Unfortunately parking is limited. Parking at the front of the building is restricted to 20 minutes. We experienced some confusion about parking on the side street. It appears to be a no-parking area, as denoted by faded red paint on the curb, but the librarian told us we could park there. There is parking behind the Police Department parking lot, but it is inconvenient for library patrons. Additional parking spaces are available in the parking lot across the street near the Corcoran Court, but this lot is full on busy court days.

Avenal Branch Library

The 1999-2000 Grand Jury made the following recommendations:

1. Make current restrooms fully handicapped accessible and available for patron use.
2. Pursue avenues of funding to expand or relocate the library.

The committee interviewed the Library Assistant II, toured the Avenal Branch Library on September 7, 2000 and followed up on the recommendations of the 1999-2000 Grand Jury. The library is co-located with the Avenal Court and the Avenal Police Department.

The exterior of the building was clean and well maintained with ample parking. The interior of the library was well organized, but the shelves were full. There was a Spanish section and a large print section of books. There was a well stocked children's section and a nice children's display. The computers donated by the Gates Foundation are located in a convenient location for the public. This branch serves approximately 25 people a day.

The lighting was good. There was a frayed seam in the carpet in front of the counter that may become a hazard. There are many dark spots on the carpet that cleaning has not removed.

Free standing shelving were bolted to the floor, but shelving along the west and north walls had been bolted into the sheet rock instead of a wall stud; it has pulled loose from the wall. White paint or plaster is splattered on the north west corner of the ceiling and high window. The high windows are dirty. Lighting would be improved with good window cleaning. Kings County Public Works does the maintenance.

Due to lack of funds, the recommendations made by the 1999-2000 Grand Jury have not yet been implemented. Patrons must go outside, around a corner and into the court lobby to use the shared public restrooms. There are large restrooms in the library for staff use only. We feel that the current situation is unsafe for children and the staff restrooms should be adapted for public use.

Armona Community Library

The Committee interviewed the Library Aide and toured the Armona Community Library on September 7, 2000. The library is a joint project of the Kings County Library, Armona Community Services, the Armona Union Elementary School District, the Armona Volunteer Fire Department, and the State of California. It is located in the Armona Community Center and was dedicated June 1, 1985. The library is also used for community meetings.

The exterior of the building was clean and appealing with ample parking. The interior had a friendly atmosphere; it is well organized and had good lighting. The furniture and carpets appeared to be clean and in good condition. The shelves were bolted to the floor. There was a Spanish language section and a section with some books in large print. There was an attractive display of periodicals and research materials. The library is used by students for study hall but it also serves the public. Approximately 80 children and 10 adults visit the library each day. Use of this library by students and the public, especially Hispanics, has increased with the installation of the computers obtained through the Gates Foundation Grant. One of these is programmed in Spanish.

Maintenance is the responsibility of the school district.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Hanford Branch Library

1. Replace carpet and upgrade shelving to meet earthquake standards.
2. Repair the wall panel containing telephone wires so the door can be locked.

Lemoore Branch Library

1. Pursue avenues of funding to expand or relocate to a larger building.
2. Explore possibilities of a better restroom location for patrons in the library.
3. Clean and paint the exterior of the building.

Corcoran Branch Library

1. Replace the stained ceiling tiles.
2. Repair the leak in the drinking fountain.
3. Repair the damage in the wall of the men's restroom.
4. Remove the red paint from the curb on the north side street if it is not meant to be a no-parking area.
5. Create some library parking areas including a handicapped space.

Avenal Branch Library

1. Make the existing restrooms in the library handicapped accessible and available for public use.
2. Rebolt the west and north shelves through the walls into studs.
3. Clean the north high windows.
4. Clean the paint splatters from the northwest corner of the ceiling and window.
5. Replace the carpet.
6. Pursue avenues of funding for expansion or relocation.

Armona Community Library: None

COMMENTS:

The Committee was pleased with the friendly cooperation and trust expressed by the County Librarian and the staff for each other. All staff interviewed were helpful to this Committee. We were especially happy to meet with the new County Librarian and hear his plans for fundraising to buy books.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Burris Park and Museum
6500 Burris Park Dr.
Kingsburg, CA
(559) 582-2733, ext. 2701

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
October 2, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The Burris land, settled in 1857, was donated to the county for a park in 1924. The 57-acre park accommodates large crowds. There are 23 picnic areas, each with its own barbecue pit, tables and benches. The two largest areas have kitchens equipped with propane, electricity and a deep pit barbecue. There are 528 parking spaces and, if needed, an adjacent field is used for added parking.

The Kings County Museum, established in 1928 and moved to Burris Park in 1955, is open from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday, Sunday and major holidays. It is closed for most of the winter season. The museum has an interesting collection of Kings County Memorabilia dating from the mid-1800s.

FINDINGS:

The Committee met with a Museum board member for a tour of the Museum. We found the exhibits well organized and all areas amazingly clean. The board member informed us that the Museum would close early this season because an air conditioner is to be installed and many exhibits must be moved to protect them from the resulting dust and the possibility of damage during the installation. The Committee felt that the people working to upgrade this Museum were doing an outstanding job.

Upon completing the Museum tour, the Committee met with the Parks Superintendent and the Caretaker for a tour of the park. Approximately 20,000 people visit Burris Park each year. On weekends and holidays there is a charge of \$2.00 per car, \$1.00 for cars with a senior citizen driver. There are eight full time and three part-time employees for all the county parks. One more employee is to be added in the next budget year. We found the park to be clean and in good condition.

The following changes have been completed or addressed per the recommendations of the 1999-2000 Grand Jury:

1. Handicapped accessible drinking fountains have been installed and more handicapped accessible restrooms are planned. They will be installed as funds become available.
2. The restrooms have been repaired and painted.

3. The barbecue pits have been repaired.
4. The trapeze has been removed.
5. The portable bases used for net games have been replaced.

All playground equipment has been removed for safety reasons. The Superintendent said that, as funds become available, new playground equipment would be installed that meet the state safety requirements.

The Superintendent told us that the park has problems with its wells. Water from one well has to be chlorinated because of contamination of bacteria and the other well has oil in it. They are very old wells. An application has been made for a state grant to fund two new wells and to update the irrigation system. The Superintendent is looking into other avenues for funding if this application is denied.

The Committee observed that the small office in the park needs a new roof. We observed large holes in the asphalt approach to the office and shop. The Superintendent said that next year he hopes to increase the entrance fee and to implement a cleaning fee deposit for reservations for large groups, which should help finance some of the ongoing repairs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Drill two new wells and update the irrigation system.
2. Install a new roof on the office and repair the approach to the office.
3. Implement a cleaning fee deposit for reservations for large groups.

COMMENTS:

1. The Grand Jury feels that the Kings County Museum volunteers are making wonderful progress to upgrade the exhibits and we thank them for all their efforts.
2. We also commend the Parks Superintendent and the Caretaker for keeping Burris Park such a clean, lovely place for people to enjoy.

ADDENDUM:

On April 23, 2001 the Board of Trustees of the Burris Park Museum gave the Grand Jury a special tour of the Museum with all the newly completed renovations, including the air conditioning. New lighting and fresh paint made the area seem more spacious and the displays were better organized. The volunteers obviously worked very hard and are to be commended for the result. The Grand Jury appreciates the many kindness shown us by the Trustees of the Museum.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Hickey Park
6850 Flint Ave.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211, ext. 2701

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
October 9, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Hickey Park was established October 8, 1958 and consists of approximately 40 acres. The parking capacity is 104 with handicapped-accessible spaces available.

The park has 32 picnic areas that can be reserved for a fee by calling the County Public Works Department. Number 30 is the largest and can handle parties up to 300; number 32 can handle up to 200 people. These two areas are equipped with electricity, barbecue pits and water for drinking and cooking. There are smaller eating and relaxation areas scattered throughout the park, several with barbecue pits.

FINDINGS:

The Committee toured Hickey Park with the Parks Superintendent. The park was clean and well maintained. There is a toll booth for collecting park fees on weekends and holidays. The fees are \$2.00 per car, \$1.00 for cars with senior drivers.

The recommendations made by the 1999-2000 Grand Jury have been partially completed. The Parks Superintendent made the following comments:

1. It would cost too much to fence the ditch that crosses the park; caution signs will be erected. He also said the water runs slowly, there have been no incidents involving the ditch as a water hazard and many visitors believe it adds beauty and charm to Hickey Park.
2. The bridge across the ditch was too deteriorated to repair and has been removed. A Lemoore Eagle Scout will construct a new bridge under close supervision at no cost to the county.

State of the art picnic tables have been installed in the largest picnic area. They are made of cement with a special finish that resists graffiti and other types of vandalism. The Superintendent indicated that future plans include one or two soccer fields and playground and softball equipment.

There have been ongoing problems with an invasion of squirrels and gophers. The Superintendent informed the Committee of a recent purchase of a squirrel/gopher eradicator called "Rodex 4000" which has been effective and is environmentally safe.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Install caution signs along the ditch.
2. Follow through with the construction of the bridge across the ditch.

COMMENTS:

The Committee was pleased with the healthy expanse of green grass and the beauty of the large mature trees. +

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kingston Park
13196 Douglas Ave.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211, ext. 2701

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
October 9, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Kingston Park was established August 28, 1972 and consists of 7 acres, located on a strip of land on the south side of Kings River. It was the site of the first Kings River Ferry Crossing. The shore line of the river at the edge of the park has a large sandy beach that is used for sunbathing and wading.

FINDINGS:

The Committee toured Kingston Park with the Parks Superintendent. There are about 11 picnic tables and benches, restrooms, a drinking fountain, and a free standing cold shower on the grass just below the restrooms. Parking is adequate. There are no facilities for the handicapped or playground equipment. The barbecue pits have burned out bottoms. There is a cement pad and hookups for a caretaker's RV or mobile home.

The Committee found it difficult to find the park due to the lack of good road signs. The faded sign on 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ Avenue is too close to the Douglas Avenue turnoff and hard to see. Directional road signs need to be erected on 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ Avenue south of Douglas Avenue and at 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ and Excelsior Avenue.

The Committee felt that the close proximity of the park to the river presented a danger of drowning and the Superintendent said that more signs will be put up along the river edge.

The recommendations made by the 1999-2000 Grand Jury have been implemented as follows:

1. The signs on the west boundary of the park have been made legible.
2. The barbecue pits are emptied on a regular basis and were clean when we were there.

The Superintendent informed us that there is an old caretaker's house that will be demolished because it contains toxic material, lead paint and asbestos, and is beyond repair.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Erect directional road signs.
2. Erect more water safety warning signs.
3. Repair or replace barbecue pits.
4. Demolish the caretaker's house.

COMMENTS:

It is worth visiting this park for its natural beauty and its relaxing atmosphere.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

County Shop/Equipment Repair and
Maintenance
11827 11th Ave.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-9207

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
April 23, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

The County shop is located on 11th Avenue north of Houston Avenue. This Shop is responsible for repairing and maintaining most County equipment, including automobiles for the Sheriff's Department and large equipment for the Road Department. There are nine employees.

The Shop consists of a long L-shaped building divided into several work areas. These areas include a warehouse, a parts room, two offices, a small training room with a computer and VCR, bays for working on vehicles, two bays for working on large equipment and a vehicle washing area. There is parking space for equipment to be repaired on the south side of the building and finished equipment on the north side of the building.

FINDINGS:

The Committee interviewed the Fleet Service Manager while he took us on a tour of the Shop facilities. First we went to the warehouse, which seemed to be well stocked with a variety of items. Lighting came only from skylights, but the Manager explained that employees were seldom in there so electric lights are left off unless needed. The Committee felt that this was good stewardship with the present power shortage situation.

The Committee noticed that the warehouse did not have fire extinguishers at each door. Possible loss of life or property is far more important than the cost of a few fire extinguishers or a fire suppressant system. We also noticed lots of dust covering everything. It appeared that the warehouse had not been cleaned for some time.

The Committee went to the parts room next where only the Manager and Partspersons are allowed. Overall, the parts seemed to be stored in good order, although some were hanging over the edge of the top shelves and could be knocked off by an earthquake or easily dislodged resulting in injury. A retaining rail would eliminate the problem.

As the Committee entered the office area, the Fleet Manager stated that the Shop is one of the leaders in statewide computer management. Employees track all parts and repair jobs by computer. Departments are billed for repairs with detailed statements generated through the computer. Shop employees receive monthly training in job safety, equipment

repair and tracking repair jobs through the computer. This system has replaced most Service and Parts Manuals and seems to have a role in employee safety. According to the Manager, the Shop has not had an injury since he became Manager six months earlier.

The Shop is inspected annually by the Bureau of Auto Repairs for licensing and smog control, and by the California Highway Patrol for record and equipment violation. In the 14 days before our visit, 253 pieces of equipment were repaired. The Manager stated that they could completely refurbish cars and give a three-year warranty on the work. He also said that they purchase most parts locally because the prices seem to average out a little cheaper than other providers and it is convenient. Parts can be ordered online.

The Committee proceeded to the work areas where we saw bays with hoists to lift cars for safety and convenience. We also saw two bays for working on large equipment, one with a special hoist for the heaviest equipment. Another bay contained equipment for washing vehicles. Each work area had a computer with a dust cover, making it convenient for reporting all steps of any repair job. We were pleased to see several safety items throughout the work areas and appropriately placed fire extinguishers. Although there was no oil on the floor, there was a heavy layer of dust everywhere and some bits of paper scattered about.

According to the Manager, the Department prioritizes jobs so the Road Department equipment will be ready by Monday morning and the Sheriff's Department vehicles will be ready by the weekends. The Service Person starts the daily maintenance work on the Road Department Equipment in the field at 5:00 A.M. so it will not interrupt the Road Department routine.

Overall, the Committee believes that the County Shop is well run. However, it should be kept cleaner, and the warehouse should be better organized, including placing fire extinguishers at each exit with signs to indicate the placement.

When the Committee asked why the Shop no longer repairs the Fire Department's equipment, the Fleet Service Manager stated they had moved that service before his employment as Manager, but he was told the Fire Department went to an outside contractor for repairs because they were not satisfied with the work done by the County.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Place fire extinguishers at the exits of the warehouse and explore the possibility of a fire suppressant system for the warehouse and parts room.
2. Install a retaining rail on the top shelves in the parts room.
3. Clean the entire building more often.
4. The Director of Public Works should encourage the Fire Department to bring their equipment repairs back to the County Shop.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury thanks the Fleet Service Manager and other employees at the County Shop for the impromptu tour and candid answers to our questions.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Government Center/Parks Shop
1400 West Lacey Blvd.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211, ext. 2690

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tours and Interview
October 9, 2000
October 30, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The Kings County Government moved to the present site in 1977. It consists of approximately 77 acres, 12 physical structures and 555,000 square feet of office space. The Kings County Public Works Department is responsible for maintenance of this center.

FINDINGS:

In planning our tour of the Kings County Government Center, the Committee decided to visit the parks maintenance shop first because of concerns engendered by past reports. The Committee toured the parks maintenance shop on October 9, 2000 with the Parks Superintendent. The building was originally a barn on the old fair grounds, probably built around the turn of the century. Except for the cement floor, which itself is rough and uneven, nothing is solid; the roof has large holes in it and there are spaces between the old boards that form the walls. The rain pours in during winter months making working with electricity a hazard. Sometimes a large portion of the floor is underwater. Because of this, this building and two smaller buildings next to it were condemned by the fire department. It is currently in use under a conditional use permit, by which part of the building was rewired and the use of electricity is restricted to one area of the structure.

The Final Reports of past Grand Juries have recommended removing and rebuilding the parks maintenance shop since at least 1990. * We find it hard to understand how Kings County could ask any employee to work under such dangerous conditions. Surely these conditions present a liability to Kings County should anyone be injured on the premises.

On our tour, we noticed that many expensive county equipment items were stored in this building including the Rodex 4000, several tractors and compressors, repair tools and equipment. Considering the dilapidated condition of this structure and the fact that the doors are secured only by chains, we feel that the County risks considerable financial loss by storing valuable equipment in these buildings. All of these buildings are nonfunctional and unsafe. This is an embarrassment to the County.

We interviewed the Public Works Director October 30, 2000, who informed us that the Kings County Board of Supervisors had authorized a \$20,000 study on building a new

shop. The Director feels the need to keep the shop on the complex, not out on 11th Avenue where the county road shop is located. He believes that the best location would be at the end of East Drive, on North Drive. Additionally, he feels there could be an "in house" analysis of the project, which would eliminate the \$20,000 expenditure.

The Committee viewed the possible location on North Drive and studied the tentative plans. We concur with the Director's opinion.

The Committee toured the County Complex with the Director of Public Works on October 30, 2000. We were dismayed at the deterioration we found. It appears that the wood panels and some doors on the outside walls of the buildings have never been oiled. They are weathering badly. Despite efforts at repair, inadequate roof drainage over the walkways between the buildings caused dry rot in the eaves and overhangs from moisture in the wood.

Several items on the Complex caused us concern. There are numerous raised planters supported by cement retaining walls throughout the Complex. The finish on these cement retaining walls is flaking off and the wood covering is also in poor condition. The paint used on the wood just a few months ago rubs off easily and could stain clothes if someone sat on it. We also noticed that most of the young trees on the complex have been "topped," giving them an ugly shape and hastening their demise.

The Director informed us that there is no preventive maintenance program for the County Complex. He mentioned the possibility of developing a program such as "Life Cycle Costing."

Parking in the County Complex is limited, especially when a jury trial is scheduled. Many people drive their cars around the lots several times before finding a parking space, often some distance from their destination. If landscaping is removed from the south side of the Grand Jury Chambers, about ten parking places could be put in for jury members.

Several Committee members expressed concern about the entrances and exits to the parking lots. We feel the entrance/exit to the jury parking off South Drive is too narrow. When a car is leaving the parking lot, there is often insufficient room for another car to enter and make a right turn. Also the entrance to the parking lot at the west side of the complex on Forum Drive creates a traffic hazard when drivers try to make a right turn into the first row of parking. The turn is so sharp that drivers must either pull very wide into the oncoming lane, or back their vehicles up to make the turn.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Build a new parks maintenance shop on North Drive.
2. Research ways to repair the walkway roofs between buildings so they drain properly. Repair the damaged wood.
3. Oil the wood panels and doors on the outside of the buildings.

4. Research possible ways to repair the cement retaining walls on the raised planting areas.
5. Repair or replace the wood covering the retaining walls, then use a wood sealer and leave the wood a natural color.
6. Initiate a program to teach proper tree pruning.
7. Obtain funding for a preventive maintenance program based on Life Cycle Costing or a similar program.
8. Make more parking available.
9. Make parking areas more convenient and safe to enter and exit.

COMMENTS:

1. The Committee feels that the Kings County Board of Supervisors must allot enough money to build a safe and up-to-date shop for employees to work in before someone is injured. We urge the Board of Supervisors to remedy this risky situation as soon as possible.
2. The county complex was built only 22 years ago, yet in some areas it is developing severe damage from neglect. If this problem is remedied, taxpayers who walk through the complex could enjoy the park-like area and be proud of what they have.

*1990-1991 Grand Jury Final Report, page 25
1992-1993 Grand Jury Final Report, page 13
1994-1995 Grand Jury Final Report, page 32

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Special Purpose or Taxing Districts
Water Districts

Kings County Water District
200 North Campus Drive
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 584-6412

Lakeside Irrigation Water District
9304 Houston Avenue
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 584-3396

Stratford Irrigation District
P. O. Box 538
Stratford, CA 93266
(559) 924-1246

Empire West Side Irrigation District
P. O. Box 66
Stratford, CA 93266
(559-947-3027

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

County Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Interview
August 14, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Many irrigation and water districts serve Kings County. To avoid duplication, this Committee chose to study the four districts listed in the Area of Inquiry to give an overview of the water supply and distribution in Kings County.

The basic programs of these districts are:

1. Distribution of the water.
2. Protection, conservation and stabilization of ground water.
3. Negotiating and contracting for supplemental water.
4. Maintaining facilities for surface water distribution for irrigation and ground water replenishment, known as "recharge."
5. Preserving the existing surface water rights held by mutual water companies through a program of water stock acquisition and retention.

Kings County Water District (KCWD), formed in 1954 under the County Water District Act, provides for water management in the northeast portion of Kings County. It consists of 143,000 acres with the City of Hanford (population approximately 41,000) near the center of the district.

Lakeside Irrigation District, formed in 1962, lies entirely within KCWD and encompasses 33,000 acres.

Stratford Irrigation District, formed on June 22, 1916, consists of approximately 9,700 acres. It is located south and east of the Lemoore Naval Air Station.

Empire Irrigation District, located west of the town of Stratford, consists of 7,400 acres.

FINDINGS:

The Committee interviewed the three managers of the districts listed in the Area of Inquiry section of this report. (The manager of KCWD also manages Lakeside Irrigation District.) Each manager serves under a board of directors. Funding comes from taxes, sale of water and rentals of the waterways. Water is delivered from June through September in normal years. KCWD monitors the depth of ground water in their area twice a year.

There is a network of irrigation canals throughout Kings County, many of which may distribute water to several irrigation districts. Most of the water is stored at Pine Flat Dam and flows through the Kings River and some comes from the Kaweah River. The Kings County districts purchase water from other districts all over California when available. In a wet year, the water table rises as the water is replenished. According to the managers, Kings County needs additional storage and/or percolation basins in the county for excess water during the wet years because locally stored water is cheaper than purchased water. Due to Federal controls, the districts cannot store more than their allotted amount in Pine Flat Dam. During wet years the extra water is released from the dam and runs into the ocean because of the lack of storage.

Precipitation in Kings County is inadequate to meet the total demand for water within the districts. Approximately 460,000 acre-feet of underground water is pumped annually for industrial, municipal and farm use. This condition has created an overdraft of available supplies of water which is expected to worsen as the urban population grows. The efficient use of water is an essential component for producing food and fiber in Kings County.

The District managers told us that there is an ongoing effort to divert some of our precious valley water to Southern California. The KCWD manager is writing articles for a local newspaper to keep the public informed of this and other water issues.

The managers expressed concern about vandalism along the canals. Where areas are fenced, vandals cut through the fences to get to the water to fish and leave trash. Elsewhere people dump unwanted household goods and garbage. The managers feel that in the past, law enforcement patrols have been insufficient to solve this problem. They would like the Board of Supervisors to

ask the Department of Fish and Game to assist the Sheriff's Department in patrolling the canal areas and enforcing the laws.

The managers told us about problems created by plant and animal pests. Puncture vines are growing rampant and squirrels are digging burrows through the canal banks. Many years ago a weevil was introduced to control the puncture vines. The weevil provided effective control of puncture vines, so effective that it eradicated the weed and died out due to starvation. If left alone, the vine grows rampant with seeds that have several sharp thorns. These seeds can puncture a tire and get into boot and shoe soles to be carried wherever the person walks. Reintroduction of this weevil would control the current infestation of puncture weeds.

Additionally, because squirrel burrows make it harder to maintain canal banks, the districts should set up a safe squirrel eradication program. The Grand Jury was especially impressed with the safe squirrel eradication system recently purchased by Kings County Public Works Park Division, and suggests that KCWD and the irrigation districts obtain a similar system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Reintroduce the weevil for puncture vine control.
2. Find a safe method to control the squirrel population.
3. The Kings County Board of Supervisors should request that the Fish and Game and Sheriff Departments patrol the canal areas and enforce the laws.
4. Find more storage and/or percolation basins for excess water in wet years.

COMMENTS:

1. All citizens should be aware of efforts by Southern California to take valley water. We consider this to be a threat to our farming economy. Not only are we lacking adequate annual precipitation, but there is an annual overdraft of approximately 1,000,000 acre-feet of underground water in the San Joaquin Valley.
2. The Grand Jury was impressed with the District Managers' knowledge and presentations.

SUMMARY

County Government

There were nine members of the Grand Jury on the County Government Committee in the year 2000-2001. Each of these dedicated members, armed with their personal expertise and interests, worked together as they all contributed in forming the Final Reports contained herein.

During our year of duty, this Committee found two serious issues that have been written about in several previous Grand Jury Reports but have never been resolved. The most serious, with the possibility of harm to county employees, is the Park Department's shop on the County Complex. (See Kings County Public Works report.) We hope the Board of Supervisors will put a new shop in the budget before someone is gravely injured and the County faces liability.

As the year progressed, we became more aware of the lack of parking spaces. Upon review, the Committee found that several past Grand Juries have reported the lack of parking, yet the problem has not been addressed. While it is true that parking space is available about 50 percent of the time, it is not on days when jury trials are starting. We also found entering and exiting the parking lots to be a hazard. (See Kings County Public Works report.)

The Committee thanks all the department officials for their cooperation and willingness to answer any and all questions on our tours and interviews. We were pleased to observe the steady hard work done by county employees.

This Committee, indeed the entire 2000-2001 Grand Jury, displayed a great sense of community spirit in our endeavors throughout the year.

Mary Lou Chase, chairperson
Phillip Wintz, Assistant Chairperson
Barbara A. Smith
Joyce Heintz
Gary L. Jones
Robert Schaub
Quinton O. Ross
Jesse M. Espino
Nancy L. Blanken
Teresa Barger



Health and Education



AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kings County Department of Health
330 Campus Drive
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211 ext. 2605

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
March 23, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

The Kings County Department of Public Health employs a multi-faceted approach to public health. The mission of the department is to help the residents of Kings County achieve the highest level of health and wellness by:

1. Emphasizing and promoting positive health behaviors
2. Encouraging individual responsibility in the healing process, including modification of life-style factors that cause disease and disability
3. Working with the community to prevent, solve or mitigate environmental health problems
4. Increasing awareness and client use of prevention services, community resources and primary health services.

The Health Department employs 106 persons, plus additional contract employees, and runs 44 public health programs. The money to run this department is derived from the County General Fund and Federal and State grants. Of these funds, 39 percent comes from grants.

Services are available to anyone regardless of color, race, creed or ability to pay. Some services are targeted to specific age groups and to individuals with special medical needs. Fees vary depending on the funding source. However, no one is refused a needed service because of inability to pay. Most facilities are handicapped-accessible, and bilingual services are available.

There are five clinic sites in Kings County: 330 Campus Drive, Hanford; 590 Skyline Boulevard, Avenal; 1002 Dairy Avenue, Corcoran; 229 "C" Street, Lemoore; 124 Becky Pease Street, Kettleman City.

Public health services offered are as follows:

Immunizations – Vaccines are available for infants, children and adults. Services are available in Avenal, Corcoran, Kettleman City, Hanford and Lemoore. Flu vaccine is provided in the fall at the senior centers. Vaccines are free of charge to children and Medicare recipients. Pneumonia vaccine is also available for a small fee.

Perinatal Outreach – This program interfaces with community agencies and reaches out into the community to educate women about the benefits of early prenatal care.

Public Health Nurse – Registered nurses provide case management, health education, disease prevention, and resource information in home, clinic, and community settings.

Family Planning – This program provides confidential, well-woman exams and contraceptive services. Pregnancy testing is available at all clinic sites.

Teen Smart and Retention – Teenagers receive education through support groups and one-on-one counseling to reduce the incidence of unintended pregnancy and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases.

AIDS/HIV Services-Tuberculosis Control – Sexually Transmitted Disease Control – Counseling, testing, referrals and appropriate therapies are available for AIDS, HIV, Tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases.

Preventive Health Care for the Aging –Seniors 55 years and older may obtain health care at senior centers and other community agencies.

California Childhood Lead – Parents receive education on the dangers of childhood lead poisoning. The program provides case management of children who have elevated blood lead levels.

Health Resource Center – Videos, periodicals and literature are available on health topics including tobacco, communicable diseases, drugs and alcohol, women's health, nutrition and other health related topics.

Child Health and Disability Prevention – Eligible children receive health exams, immunizations, developmental assessment, hearing and vision testing, lab work, diagnosis and treatment services. Staff members are available for referral services including specialty needs such as dental services.

Tobacco Control – This program promotes the prevention of tobacco use through education.

Women, Infants and children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition – Parents receive money for supplemental foods and also nutrition education. These services are at no cost for low-income women (pregnant, breastfeeding, or postpartum), infants, and children under five years old.

Environmental Health Services are as follows:

Food Safety – There are over 500 food facilities with permits to operate in Kings County. These are inspected on a routine basis throughout the year. Investigations are made of complaints about food service operations and reported cases of food borne

illness. Also, assistance is given to community organizations with the planning and implementation of special events involving food booths.

Water Quality – The Water Quality Program issues permits and regulates small public water systems. These systems typically serve rural schools, restaurants, mobile home parks, motels and small subdivisions. The State Department of Health Services issues permits for larger water systems.

Recreational Health – Public pools are inspected and pool water is tested for chemical and bacterial quality during the months they are open.

Liquid Waste Management – Commercial septic tank and chemical toilet cleaning businesses must be registered with Environmental Health Services.

Solid Waste Enforcement – Environmental Health Services is the designated local solid waste enforcement agency for state regulations on the operation of solid waste collection vehicles, transfer stations, material recovery facilities, composting facilities and landfills. It also issues permits for solid waste facilities.

Hazardous Materials – This program is responsible for permitting and enforcement for underground storage tanks, businesses with hazardous materials, and hazardous waste generators.

Occupational Health And Safety – A variety of consulting services related to Occupational Health and Safety are available to both the public and private sector upon request.

Laboratory Services – Laboratory Services supports both Environmental Health Services and Public Health Services. The lab can also provide laboratory testing for private health service providers on request for the identification of communicable diseases. Fees vary according to the test.

FINDINGS:

The Committee made an unannounced visit to the Department of Public Health to familiarize ourselves with the facility, to view the new wing built last year and to follow up on the recommendations made by the 1999-2000 Grand Jury. We spoke first to the director of Environmental Health. Our Committee was given a brief tour along with a description of his office duties. The Committee then visited the Director of Public Health to speak with him in regard to last year's recommendations. Our visit was a surprise but nonetheless we were greeted cordially. The Director of Public Health is a physician but also plans and directs operations of the County Health Department.

Again this year in, the Community Health Status Report found that Kings County ranks low in all categories of health care in California. The County has the highest death rate from diabetes in the state. As of last year the Director is attempting to form a coalition

with private health care providers to bring some sort of a solution for these health care problems. Grants are being sought on a continuous basis for funding for this project. The County Health Department receives its funding from three departments: the County General Fund and Federal and State grants.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS: None

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Corcoran District Hospital
1310 Hanna Avenue
P.O. Box 758
Corcoran, California 93212
(559) 992-3972

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
December 7, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Corcoran District Hospital is the only remaining publicly funded hospital in Kings County. This is a thirty-two-bed facility containing two private rooms and four semi-private rooms. Eight beds can be used as swing beds and three for prisoners or isolation. An oxygen system has recently been installed in all rooms. The Emergency Room includes two small examination rooms, one reserved for labor or rape cases. The hospital has a Laboratory, Respiratory Therapy Unit, Full Diagnostic Radiology Unit and Work Care/Rural Health Clinic. Seven doctors are on active staff with a compliment of skilled nurses.

FINDINGS:

The Committee made an unannounced visit to Corcoran District Hospital. We were greeted by the Director of Nursing Services, the Chief Executive Financial Officer and the new Administrator. The new Administrator, assigned to this hospital three months earlier, is employed by Brim Health Care, a for-profit health care provider working to restructure the financial status of the hospital.

The majority of patients at Corcoran District Hospital are classified as "indigent care," and the major portion of the medical services they receive are paid for by MediCal and Medicare. The Financial Director stated that receiving long overdue MediCal and Medicare payments would help restore financial stability to the hospital. We were told Medical/Medicare reimbursements for the past fifteen years have been made at a meager rate of eighteen cents per cost dollar. The hospital has requested grants for assistance from the county, state and federal government, as well as private corporations.

The Committee received an informative and enjoyable tour throughout the hospital, starting at the main lobby in the new wing built in 1978. We visited the Records, Radiology, Work Care/Rural Health Clinic, Emergency room and Cafeteria. The Administrative Officer made a point of telling us that the doctor in charge of the Work Care/Rural Health Clinic was born and raised in the community of Corcoran. Engineers have inspected the older part of the hospital and are preparing a report due January 1, 2001 regarding its earthquake safety. Staff donations have funded the

conversion of a storage room into a surgical instrument sterilization room. For the past two years the hospital has had a zero infection rate.

The cafeteria is small but efficient. In the cafeteria, as well as several other areas, improvements have been funded or are in the process of being funded by volunteers. In the eating area there is a large window, which the staff would like to remove and replace with a large automatic glass sliding door. This would allow easier access to the courtyard, where picnic tables could be set up for breaks and lunch. The hospital staff has raised sixteen hundred dollars in donations and needs an additional one thousand dollars for installation of this door.

The hospital has benefited from volunteer fund raising by hospital employees as well as by local organizations. The Corcoran 50/50 Club raised the funds for a new gurney for the emergency room, and the hospital staff paid for another. The hospital staff is remodeling all patient rooms one at a time, as they raise the funds for paint, wallpaper, blinds, valances, pictures and so forth. The staff also pays for decorations for special occasions. The nursing staff hopes to obtain sponsors who will adopt a room for a three- to five- year term, during which they will be responsible for maintenance of the room décor.

The Director of Nursing stated the hospital's most critical needs are a new ice machine, an intercom system and an upgraded computer system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Apply for grants to compensate for MediCal/Medicare underpayments for indigent care.
2. Install automatic glass sliding door.
3. Purchase an intercom and upgrade the computer system.
4. Obtain a new icemaker.

COMMENTS:

Personal touches seen throughout the hospital are evidence of the staff's love for their job, their patients and their work environment.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kings County Commission on Aging
Mary Brock Hall
1197 South Drive
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211 ext. 2824

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
August 11, 2000
Interview
September 8, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Kings County Commission on Aging (KCCOA) is the local agency funded through Tulare/Kings County Area Agency on Aging (T/KCAAA). The goal of KCCOA is to provide information and referral, and to offer assistance, support and advocacy for the senior citizens of Kings County as prescribed and outlined in the Older Americans Act.

KCCOA offices are located in the north half of Mary Brock Hall in the Kings County Government Center. KCCOA is governed by a twenty-one member board. It operates a number of programs beneficial to Kings County elderly, including:

1. The Ombudsman Program, a State/Federal mandated program, seeks to resolve problems and complaints made by or on behalf of residents in nursing and residential care facilities for the elderly. It serves fifty facilities in Kings and Tulare Counties.
2. The Senior Nutrition Program operates a kitchen in the Lemoore senior citizens facility. It prepares meals which are distributed throughout Kings County to seniors sixty years and older. This provides two-thirds of their daily nutritional requirements. Four hundred fifty meals are served at seven sites and seventy "Meals on Wheels" in Kings County.
3. Adult Day Support Center is located in a modular building adjacent to Mary Brock Hall. This program provides senior day care, including three meals and two snacks, to an average of ten seniors a day. For those who can afford to pay, the cost is \$25 per day.

The 1999-2000 Grand Jury reported that the Director of KCCOA expressed concern about plans to relocate Social Services and demolish Mary Brock Hall, which currently houses the Commission. The Director indicated that she would prefer that Mary Brock Hall be renovated rather than demolished, and the entire building turned over to KCCOA to be used for its programs.

FINDINGS:

The Committee met with the Director of Services, who gave us a tour of the building. As we walked through the building, she introduced us to the employees with a brief description of their duties. There are seven full-time and three part-time employees paid by KCCOA. In addition, twenty-one persons from other agencies work out of this office. The portion of Mary Brock Hall now occupied by KCCOA is extremely crowded. Employees must share small spaces for desks and work areas.

According to the Director, no definite plans have been established for Mary Brock Hall or the other buildings and agencies housed there. The future of the buildings in the southeast section of the Kings County Government Center, including Mary Brock Hall, continues to be in doubt. The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator are responsible for making these plans. The Committee feels that they are already several years late in making these plans, which could be formulated by the end of fiscal year 2000-2001.

The Director of KCCOA continues to feel that the best possible outcome for her commission would be to renovate Mary Brock Hall, instead of demolishing it, and to house the commission in the entire building. This would require moving Child Protective Services to another location.

On our tour we noticed numerous problems with the building and furnishings. The carpet is very worn, dirty and stained. The walls and ceilings are in need of repair and paint. However, it seems pointless to us to refurbish this building until its future is decided. The committee was impressed by the amount of work done by the director and her knowledge of the entire scope of the KCCOA.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The County Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator should develop a definite plan for the southeast area of the Kings County Government Center by the end of fiscal year 2000-2001. This plan should include provisions for agencies such as KCCOA which might be displaced.
2. Replace the carpet in Mary Brock Hall, if it is decided to continue using this building for more than two years.
3. Repair and paint the interior of the building, if it is to be used for office space for more than two years.

COMMENTS:

The Committee shared a tasty nutritional lunch with the seniors. The Grand Jury thanks the Director of Services for our tour.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Hanford Senior Centers

Davis Senior Center
206 W. Davis Street
Hanford, CA 93230
(559)-582-7991

View Road Senior Center
602 9 ¼ Avenue
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 583-9258

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tours
August 25, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The Hanford Senior Center is located in a building owned and occupied by the Kings County Housing Authority. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday the center serves lunch to 35 to 40 seniors. On Tuesday and Thursday they serve 28 to 30 seniors. Donations of \$1.50 are requested at both facilities, but no one is turned away for lack of funds. The proceeds are deposited into the Tulare County Human Services Agency bank account. Most of the seniors taking advantage of this center come from central downtown and not from the South Hanford area.

The View Road Center is located at a senior citizens' apartment villa. This Center serves 35 to 40 hot lunches 5 days a week. Approximately fifteen persons drive to the Center for meals, and the remainder come from View Road Apartments. The Center is owned by the Farmers Home Administration.

FINDINGS:

Members of the Committee introduced themselves to the aides at both centers. The aides work six hours a day and are responsible for cleaning and setting up tables for meals at both centers. Sometimes participants in the Welfare to Work program or individuals ordered to perform community service by the courts assist the aides. The aides create a positive atmosphere by decorating the dining room using different themes each month, recognizing birthdays and having holiday parties. This encourages senior interaction. The seniors work on crafts and puzzles, as well as playing bingo.

Both centers are very attractive and appear well maintained. They are open from 9:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. When we arrived at approximately 9:45 A.M. we noticed about 20 seniors already there playing bingo or doing needlework.

The Hanford Senior Center was recently repainted throughout, and a new linoleum tile floor was installed. A wall divider was removed at the back of the building, providing space for an office and reading area. This room also opens to a shaded lawn outside where seniors can gather and chat.

The Hanford Senior Center receives donations of cereal, rolls, cookies, juice, milk and fruits. These foods are bagged and given to the seniors for breakfast or evening meals at home.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

We found both centers inviting, organized and clean.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kings County Community School
11835 South 11th Avenue
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 589-7080

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Interview
April 6, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Kings County Community School was established in 1993 as a joint effort of the Kings County Board of Education and the Kings County Probation Department. Its purpose is to provide a structured educational opportunity for high school students unable to adjust to traditional programs and for students whose behavior has resulted in expulsion from regular school.

When a student enrolls in Kings County Community School (KCCS), the school staff develops an individual educational plan appropriate to his or her needs. Students may earn school credits toward graduation at the same rate as in other schools. It is possible for a student to graduate from high school at KCCS.

FINDINGS:

The Committee made an unexpected visit to KCCS. The enrollment this year is 83 students ranging from seventh to twelfth grade. There are five classrooms, two computer labs, six teachers, one principal and one probation officer. The campus consists of one permanent building and one modular building. There is room outside the facility for students to play basketball or volleyball. Students also have space to plant a small garden.

The purpose of our visit was to check on the 1999-2000 Grand Jury recommendation. The recommendation stated that property for a new school should be purchased with sufficient space for physical education and to allow for future growth. This was not done, but the school did relocate to the building formerly occupied by the County Planning Department on South 11th Avenue in the summer of 2000. Even though the school relocated, the Committee believes this site does not allow for future growth, and continues to recommend that a property be purchased that is more suitable to their needs

Finally, the student body wants to change the school from Kings County Community School to Second Chance School.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Purchase land or allocate property that is already owned by the school district for a new school that has sufficient space for physical education and allows for future growth.

COMMENTS:

We found the staff of this school very friendly and helpful. There was an obvious bond of cooperation between them.

AREA OF INQUIRY

Corcoran Joint Unified School
District

Bret Harte School
1300 Letts Ave.
Corcoran, CA 93212
(559) 992-2188

John C. Fremont School
1900 Bell Ave.
Corcoran, CA 93212
(559) 992-5102

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Interview/Follow-up
March 16, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Bret Harte School and John C. Fremont School are two of six schools in the Corcoran Unified School District. Corcoran's demographics are similar to many rural farming communities. Nearly 50 percent of its students do not speak English as their native tongue. The Federal Migrant Education program serves 37 percent of the school population.

Students are drawn from the school-age population of Corcoran and the surrounding area. Because of the large number of children enrolling in the lower grades, the school district uses its facilities in a unique way. Students in the lower grades are assigned to one facility that houses only one or two grade levels.

Bret Harte School, opened in 1953, houses 520 students. Currently there are 13 sections of kindergarten (seven in the morning and six in the afternoon) and 12 first grade classes. Class size averages 18 to 20 students. A state preschool program for approximately 110 children between the ages of 3 and 5 is located on the same campus.

There are 35 teachers at Bret Harte, of whom 8 are bilingual. The school has one Reading Specialist Program (RSP) teacher, one Reading Recovery teacher, one Resource/Reading Recovery teacher, four preschool teachers, and two teacher aides.

The school is on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) national school breakfast/lunch program. Those children who are at or below the income level established by the State of California are given free breakfasts and lunches; others can purchase reduced-price meals. All students may eat breakfast and lunch, although some students pay full price. Approximately 75 percent of the student body receives free or reduced-price meals.

John C. Fremont School, constructed in 1951, has an enrollment of 537 students in second and third grades. The school has 28 classrooms and 31 teachers. There is one RSP teacher, one teacher who supervises the reading program and one long-term substitute. Seven bilingual teachers instruct 40 second grade and 60 third grade students. For foreign-language-speaking students, there are a total of 3 English immersion classes, in which there are 25 second grade and 40 third grade students enrolled. John C. Fremont School is also on the USDA free and reduced-price breakfast/lunch program, which serves 82 percent of the student body. All students may eat breakfast and lunch, although some students pay full price.

FINDINGS:

The Committee held an in house interview with the Assistant Superintendent to discuss the findings of the 1999-2000 Grand Jury. The Assistant Superintendent informed the Committee that they had a rough start with California Early Literacy Learning Program (CELL). This year the program is successful in both J. C. Fremont and Bret Harte Schools.

CELL is a program designed to help children master reading and writing skills. Reading is the center of the program and is taught by a variety of approaches, which include reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, phonics and independent reading, in conjunction with interactive and independent writing. The CELL program requires parent/teacher involvement on a continuous basis in keeping with Corcoran Unified School District standards.

The Committee was also informed of several improvements at Bret Harte School. The perimeter is now entirely fenced. The parking lots have been redesigned and new loading and unloading zones established for children arriving by bus and automobile, which has made them convenient and effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS: None

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Corcoran Community Day School
1128 South Dairy Ave.
Corcoran, CA 93212
(559) 992-3951

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Interview/Follow-up
March 16, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Corcoran Community Day School is administered by the Corcoran Unified School District. It is located on the south side of Corcoran on property owned by the Agriculture Department of Corcoran High School. The school site is currently zoned for agricultural use only. A temporary variance allows the site to be used for a classroom.

The campus consists of approximately half an acre surrounded by chain link fence over six feet tall. The grounds in front of the classroom are surfaced with medium-sized rocks. There are no trees, chairs or benches on campus. The property offers no place for exercise or other athletic endeavors.

A portable (double-wide) classroom houses students grades seven through twelve. Because these students have experienced considerable difficulties in their educational careers, most of them are not working at grade level. Presently there are twenty in the class. All of these students have been expelled from regular school and are under the authority of a probation officer.

There is one Principal Teacher, one full-time Teacher's aide and a Community Contact Aide who drives a van for disabled children as well as helping in the classroom. There is also one Probation Officer whose other duties keep him out of the classroom for varying portions of the day. The Probation Officer assists in maintaining control in the classroom and writes referrals, which lead to suspension.

FINDINGS:

The Committee held an in house interview with the Assistant Superintendent to follow up on the recommendations made by the 1999-2000 Grand Jury. She concurred with the recommendations and characterized the year's Grand Jury report as accurate. However, the changes have been made.

This year the atmosphere has stabilized with the hiring of a new Principal/Teacher. He insists that the students show self-respect and extend the same respect to their peers. The class has written its own code of conduct that is posted in the classroom, and everyone must follow it. The Principal/Teacher has been very successful in obtaining grants for new computers, desks, textbooks, physical education equipment, donated items and

services. The staff hopes to have the cement poured soon for a basketball court and benches installed for students to sit on during break. Student involvement in some of these projects is encouraged so that the student body will take pride in their school. Security was a big issue last year. We were informed that new fencing with razor wire pointing outward and alarm systems have been installed to keep would be vandals out. We hope that this will solve the problems with theft and vandalism that occurred last year.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury appreciates the time the Superintendent spent in coming to the Grand Jury Chambers.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Corcoran High School
100 Letts Ave.
Corcoran CA 93212
(559) 992-5061

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
October 20, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Corcoran High School, established in 1939, is one of the oldest existing high schools in the Valley. The beautiful architectural theme of the two-story administration building runs throughout the campus. The old switchboard in the office and the light board in the auditorium are preserved for future generations to appreciate as artifacts from the past. Attending Corcoran High School are 800 students, with 34 students taking independent studies. The teaching staff consists of 42 teachers and 5 aides.

FINDINGS:

The school has had quite a face lift this past year, with a new elevator and renovated restrooms which have been made handicapped accessible. Every classroom has six computers, a new air-conditioning unit and digital wiring throughout for Internet use.

New educational programs offered this year are: English Language Learners Academy for non-English-speaking students (seventy-five percent Hispanic); Virtual Enterprise, where students create a virtual business (car customizing) online; Computer repair, where students are taught how to repair their own computers to cut down on expenses. The Agricultural Department is the strongest in the state, with 300 students participating. It has a mobile science lab that is linked online to Stanford University.

The Counseling Department offers all students a four-year plan in career pathways, setting up internships and job shadow days at Corcoran Prison and J.G. Boswell Company. Also, college visitations help students decide what their career decisions are and what colleges are available. We were told that the school needs more money for college visitations.

Because of low scores on the Standard Achievement Test Ninth Edition (SAT 9) each class now requires a daily 12-minute reading time. Students read independently at their personal reading level. The school is pushing for higher scores, to bring students up to grade level. The library offers a reading improvement course on computers. When a student finishes a book, he or she takes a test. Upon passing the test, he or she will advance to a higher reading level. The Principal stated, "The students love it and are excelling in reading ability."

This school has wonderful community support. This year's Back to School graduation has the largest attendance of any public event in Corcoran over five thousand people attend every year.

We learned of several problem areas, however. Parents have complained about the lack of a cafeteria/multi-purpose room, there is no cafeteria and students get their lunch at the snack bar in the gym. Students eat in the old gym on bad weather days. We noticed one hazardous situation. The blacktop surrounding the gym is cracked and broken throughout. Students and staff could fall and be injured.

Finally, the school does not have a police officer assigned to the campus. The Principal told us that she would feel more secure with an officer present.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Seek funding to take students on college visitations.
2. Work with the Corcoran Police Department to apply for a grant to have a police officer on campus.
3. Pursue funding for a cafeteria/multi-purpose room.
4. Repair or replace the blacktop surrounding the old gym.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury was impressed with the impromptu tour provided by the school Principal. Her knowledge of the school's history, which she shares with the students and community, gives them all a common bond.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Hanford Elementary School District
714 North White Street
P.O. Box G – 1067
Hanford, California 93232
(599) 585-2265

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Interview
April 6, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Hanford Elementary School District consists of ten schools: Lee Richmond Elementary School (grades K – 6); Lincoln Elementary School (grades K – 3); Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School (bilingual or total immersion English grades K – 6); Roosevelt Elementary School (grades K – 6, and four preschool classrooms); Jefferson Elementary School (grades 4 – 6); Monroe Elementary School (grades K – 6); Washington Elementary School (grades K – 6); John F. Kennedy Junior High School; and Woodrow Wilson Junior High School. The Joe Simas Elementary School building was completed in the Fall of 2000 and is being used by Lincoln Elementary School for the 2000-2001 school year while Lincoln is undergoing reconstruction. Simas will start classes in Fall 2001.

Hanford Elementary School District is an inner city school system located within the city limits of Hanford. Approximately 5,000 students are enrolled. Between 73 and 80 percent are eligible for free or reduced cost lunches. Half-day Kindergarten classes will be changed to full days, to keep attendance at 550 children.

There are 211 certified classroom teachers, 18 Special Education teachers, 10 Literacy/Math coaches, 3 Technology teachers and 2 Title VII teachers, and 3 Alternative Education teachers. The district has 141 tenured teachers with clear credentials, and 75 probationary teachers with preliminary or clear credentials. Additionally five temporary teachers are working outside their credential area. Thirty teachers serve on emergency permits.

FINDINGS:

The Committee made an unannounced visit to the Hanford Elementary School District office. We were pleased to see that the beautiful old brick building had not fallen down, though a plaque at the door advised us to be cautious when entering due to earthquake safety codes. The Committee was promptly ushered in to the Superintendent's office where she brought the Committee up to date on the recommendations of the 1999-2000 Grand Jury Final Report. We were informed that the new Joe Simas School has been completed, and Lincoln School occupies the building until the renovations on that facility are finished.

Under the recommendations of last year, the districts were rezoned and class sizes have been equalized. According to a new State law, parents and guardians may enroll their children in a school of their choice within the district from September 15th to October 1, 2001 if space is available.

Seeing that the children in the school district get proper nutrition is another way of insuring that they will learn at their optimum level. The Superintendent would like to see all students receive free breakfasts and lunches. Although 98 percent of the students are poor, many of them—especially in the 7th and 8th grades—fail to take advantage of the current program because they are embarrassed if they have to show a reduced or free meal pass. The District is currently looking at possible solutions.

Members of the Committee feel that a system similar to one used in Kentucky, where each student has an identification card that doubles as a prepaid lunch card, would eliminate the problem of some children being embarrassed to be on the free/low cost meal program and reduce the possibility of lunch money theft. The cashier inserts the card in a card reader and either makes a deduction from the student's account or notes that the student is on the free lunch program and records that they received their lunch. An after school care program is still in the planning stages, although a pilot program offered at Roosevelt Elementary School has been successful.

A quarterly newspaper, HESD Today, is mailed to parents. In addition to information about subjects such as kindergarten registration, the newspaper keeps parents abreast of training provided to district school staff, introduces new personnel, reports school sports updates and tracks the progress of the school renovation project. Each school in the District contributes articles about school activities and new technology being applied in the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Investigate the possibility of instituting a computerized identification card that doubles as a prepaid lunch card.

COMMENTS: None

AREA OF INQUIRY:

James Monroe
Elementary School
300 Monroe Drive
Hanford, Ca. 93230
(559) 585-2286

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
February 16, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

James Monroe School was established in 1952. It is located in Northwest Hanford and is a part of the Hanford Elementary School District. School buildings include six classroom wings, an office area, a cafeteria and a library serving grades kindergarten through six. Approximately 730 students are enrolled. This is the school system's largest school, and it is at capacity.

Staff includes 35 teachers, a School Operations Officer, a Literary Coach, a Resource Specialist and a Registered Nurse. The cafeteria provides breakfast and lunch at a reasonable cost. Those who qualify receive free meals. The Library is open during all recesses for student use. Each grade level has library access with reading programs and reading incentives. Every classroom has computers, including one for the teacher's use. This was funded through a grant program. The Registered Nurse visits the school three times a week and is always available by phone during school hours. Five teachers are trained in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.

FINDINGS:

A considerable amount of remodeling and refurbishing has been going on at James Monroe School. A new parking lot has recently been constructed on the west side of the school, eliminating the need for bus loading and unloading on the public streets. This was a safety concern, but now parking for parents and guests is better organized and definitely safer. A new playground for kindergartners has also been installed.

The school cafeteria meets many needs. Besides being the school dining hall, it also serves as an emergency clothier. A rack of children's clothing in all sizes (even shoes), donated by the parents, stands in the corner of the room for emergency needs. If a child comes to school without a jacket or needs an emergency change of clothes, he or she can find something to wear here. The cafeteria also serves as a theater for school assemblies, complete with a stage. On rainy days it's a game room with game boards painted on the floor. Finally, it is a child care center where the Y.M.C.A. conducts a daily after-school care program.

The Committee visited three classrooms. In the kindergarten room we observed the teacher reading to her class, which was comfortably seated on the floor. The teacher and

her students were so absorbed in their task, they hardly seemed to notice us. Next, following the Learning Director's recommendation, we visited the classroom of a new teacher. The Learning Director told us that finding credentialled teachers with a great desire for teaching, like this one, is difficult. His wish for the school was more quality credentialled teachers, more classrooms and more professional development specialists.

We watched the new teacher during his fifth grade mathematics class. The class was especially enthusiastic as they worked the math facts on the board. Not only were their computations accurate, the students corrected the instructor when he purposely made an error.

Two programs at the school stand out. There is excellent yard supervision, run and staffed by volunteers. Another great program that inspires creativity is the school postal system that gives each child his or her own address.

Several problems did come to the Committee's attention. First, Committee members noticed water pooling underneath the milk refrigerator, which is located in the cafeteria outside the door to the kitchen. We concluded that the milk refrigerator was leaking, and informed the janitor, who mopped up the water. The source of this water should be checked out and repairs made if necessary. Second, a broken grate on a storm drain located near the office constitutes a possible safety hazard. Every child we observed purposely walked on it. Third, water was standing in the whole length of the flowerbed along one classroom wing. That seemed odd, since water from the most recent rain had evaporated everywhere else. We drew the Principal's attention to this, and she asked a maintenance person to correct the problem. By the time we left, several groundskeepers were working on the flowerbed. Fourth, we noticed that the concrete sidewalks were cracked and broken, with gaps where the concrete was missing. Fifth, a wooden pallet on the north side of one classroom posed a safety hazard. Children could trip over it or break off jagged, splintery pieces to play with. Finally, the rain gutters were full of trash and debris and need to be cleaned.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Inspect milk refrigerator and make repairs as necessary.
2. Repair or replace broken storm drain grate.
3. Investigate the cause or causes of the standing water in the flowerbed and take appropriate action to eliminate it in the future.
4. Repair cement sidewalks.
5. Remove the wooden pallet.
6. Remove accumulated debris from the rain gutters and set up a maintenance schedule to address this problem proactively in the future.

COMMENTS:

It is to be hoped that the student overflow at James Monroe School will be eased next year when Joe Simas School is open and excess students can be transferred there. The School could use more teachers like the Learning Director and the fifth grade teacher.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Lincoln Elementary School
1875 Fitzgerald Lane
P.O.Box 1067
Hanford CA 93232
(559) 585-2276

Joe Simas Elementary School
Grangeville & University
Hanford CA 93230
Not available

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
February 16, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Joe Simas School is a new facility in its first year of use. The faculty and students of Lincoln School are occupying the facility this school year while Lincoln School buildings are being remodeled. Grades kindergarten through third are now in session. The school has about 475 students, 24 teachers, a literacy coach and a learning director. Next year Joe Simas School will enroll kindergarten through sixth grade.

FINDINGS:

On this unannounced visit the Committee was greeted by a pleasant principal. The Principal showed us a well-planned efficient campus layout. The spacious cafeteria all-purpose room was our first stop on the tour. The Committee then proceeded to a bilingual third grade classroom, where we were told that 80 to 90 percent of the class would be fluent in English by the end of the year. Next, the Committee observed a colorful well-decorated first grade classroom. Some students were in a reading group, reading aloud in turn. Others were reading silently. The Committee proceeded into the kindergarten room, where the students were preparing for lunch.

Although we enjoyed seeing the beautiful new school campus, we did note some problems. Touring the classrooms, the Committee noticed that fire extinguisher signs were not posted, and bookcases were blocking access to the fire extinguishers.

Later we observed a bus driver giving a safety lesson to the children about the proper way to get on and off the bus. Unfortunately she did not pull close enough to the curb. This caused the children to step down off the curb and onto the pavement and then back up to the bus. This is dangerous and could cause an accident.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Put signs to indicate where fire extinguishers are located.
2. Remove bookcases from blocking access to the fire extinguishers.
3. Instruct the bus driver to stop close enough to the curb to allow students to step directly to the curb or sidewalk.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury enjoyed seeing what a new school looked like.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Roosevelt Elementary School
870 W. Davis, P.O. Box 1067
Hanford, CA 93232-1067
(559) 585-2312

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
April 06, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Roosevelt Elementary School is a part of the Hanford Elementary School District. It is located in southwest Hanford. Construction of Roosevelt School began in 1951, with the final buildings completed in 1962, serving pre-school through sixth grades. Six classrooms were remodeled in 1987. Modernization of the campus is ongoing, with plans for building a new office and library ready for use by the 2001-2002 school year. There are eighteen regular and eight portable classrooms. To insure that the school meets district standards of safety and appearance it is monitored regularly by a district inspection team. The campus is fully handicapped accessible.

The educational staff consists of twenty-seven teachers, one band teacher and two administrators. The first through fourth grades have teachers' aides.

FINDINGS:

The Committee made an unannounced visit and after a lengthy wait for the Principal in the school's small office, we proceeded on our own. The School Operations Officer informed the Committee the school enrollment this year is 579, of which 84 are pre-school children. Roosevelt Elementary School is the only State funded pre-school in the Hanford Elementary School District. There are two pre-school classrooms with morning and afternoon sessions.

Our visit to the cafeteria was to follow up on the 1999-2000 Grand Jury's recommendations. The problems of the food quality and the inappropriate behavior of food servers, as noted by 1999-2000 Grand Jury Report, seem to have been addressed.

During the Committee's visit in the cafeteria, we observed that the contact cement was bleeding through the seams of the floor tile. The overall appearance of the kitchen seemed clean except for a dusty wall mounted fan.

We checked the restrooms in the cafeteria and found that of the two sinks in the girls' restroom, only one was usable. In the boys' restroom water was constantly running in the two urinals. Both restrooms needed to be cleaned and painted.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Institute a better maintenance and cleaning schedule for the school.
2. Repair the flooring in the cafeteria.
3. Repair or replace the fixtures in the cafeteria restrooms.
4. Repaint the restroom walls.
5. Clean the wall-mounted fan in the kitchen.

COMMENTS: None

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Hanford High School
120 East Grangeville Blvd.
Hanford, California 93230
(559) 582-4407

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
January 19, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Hanford High School is located on Grangeville Boulevard. In 1968 the old high school building was replaced due to earthquake safety codes, and new circular buildings were erected in its place. Some original buildings still exist on the campus. The campus also includes agricultural shops, automotive shop, two gyms, and numerous athletic facilities for sports participants.

There are 1,610 students, averaging twenty-six students per class; eighty-three credentialed teachers; four yard supervisors and four special education teachers. There is a full-time police officer present on campus. Forty-seven classrooms have internet accessibility.

Some campus buildings offer opportunities for community activities. The library is furnished with computers, with internet services offered to the community after school Monday through Thursday 3:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. A large Presentation Center is open to the community on scheduled occasions.

This will be the last year that both East and West Campus will be combined. The Hanford High School Campus will be independent from Hanford West High School after the 2001 Senior Class graduates. West Campus will use the Neighbor Bowl for home football games.

FINDINGS:

The Committee made a scheduled meeting to tour the school and meet with the administration. We discussed attendance, test scores and the image the school wants to project to the students and to the community. Our Committee observed some of the changes that the school is doing to develop school spirit, with school colors and mascot theme. These include school colors painted on doors and new signs.

As the Committee toured the campus grounds, we observed an open muddy area in the courtyard being replaced by cement so students will have more room to congregate. Efforts to improve the school's appearance were observed by the Committee; however more attention needs to be centered on landscaping, litter removal, and building maintenance. The asphalt surfaces need repair.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Refurbish landscaping.
2. Repair asphalt surfaces.
3. Remove litter from campus grounds.
4. Upgrade building maintenance program.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury thanks the principal for the time she took to give us the tour. Many of us have noticed the High School Bull Pup sign at Grangeville and Douty, but we wish the dates listed were current. We appreciate the fact that the High School allows community use of Neighbor Bowl for evening exercise.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Hanford West High School
1150 Campus Drive
(559) 583-0157

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tours/Follow-up
January 19, 2001
February 09, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Hanford High West Campus was built in 1963 as an extension of Hanford High School. With the goal of becoming two independent schools three years ago, the East Campus and West Campus split. Hanford High West Campus has changed its name to Hanford West High School, and Hanford High East Campus is now named Hanford High School. At the time of the Committee visit, student enrollment was 1,415, with 73 teachers and 4 campus monitors. A full time Hanford Police Officer, trained in CPR and emergency first aid, also serves as a Health Officer. The school has a contract with the County Health Department for medical emergencies, which are handled by the local hospital emergency rooms.

This 2001 senior class will be the last class graduating from the combined high school. The school has seven forty-seven minute periods per day with an average of 27 to 28 students per class.

Recent additions have been made to the Hanford West High School in preparation for the split. The school has a new library with computer access for all students. A beautiful new Event Center built in the year 2000 doubles as a gymnasium. Remodeled classrooms, new ball fields, and other major changes have been made in preparation for the division of the two schools.

FINDINGS:

The Committee met with the Vice Principal, who took us on a tour of the facilities. Just north of the school office he showed us the large courtyard to accommodate outdoor assemblies and other activities. Next to it is the Event Center. The Vice Principal mentioned to us that it is the largest event center in Kings County. Inside is a gymnasium, weight room, snack bar with a snack area and theater room.

We found the campus to be free of litter except for construction debris due to remodeling. During our tour the Vice Principal informed us maintenance crews were removing asbestos from older classrooms.

The information we received was not sufficient to write our report, so a follow up visit was necessary. At that interview the Principal showed us the blueprints of the campus as it will look when the project is finished. The Committee was quite impressed.

The Principal expressed his concern for the safety of the students due to the numbers of cars unloading students and parking on Campus Drive. He feels the front parking lot should be used by all students and parents arriving and departing by vehicle and new crosswalks should be painted on Campus Avenue across from the County Complex.

However, the Grand Jury feels that requiring all cars to enter the parking lot to load and unload students would lead to much traffic congestion on Campus Drive. We concur with the necessity for crosswalks but parents should be allowed to discharge and pick up students on Campus Drive with proper curb markings and signs eliminating long-term parking.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Solve traffic related student safety problems.
2. The City and County should engineer traffic controls with curb paintings, signs and crosswalks.

COMMENTS:

The Committee was impressed with the new additions, the smaller number of students per classroom, which allows more one-on-one attention, and the sincere concern of the Principal for the safety of the students. We found him very cooperative in answering our questions, volunteering information and making the tours interesting and enjoyable.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Lemoore Union High School
101 East Bush Street
Lemoore, CA 03245
(559) 924-5086

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
November 17, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The Lemoore Union High School District serves over 2,000 students enrolled from western Kings County, Lemoore, Stratford, Santa Rosa Rancheria, Island District and Lemoore Naval Air Station. This includes Jamison High School, a continuation high school on the same campus, and Yokuts High School, which has classrooms located at the Rancheria.

Lemoore High School is the pride of the community, with a mix of original buildings constructed in the 1920s and new structures built in the same mission style. For the past three years, Lemoore Union High School District has been working diligently to renovate and build educational facilities in keeping with the original theme and designed to meet the future needs of students and the community.

FINDINGS:

The Committee made a visit to Lemoore High School and met with the Principal. He took great pride in sharing information on the school's scholastic scores and the general activities of the school year. One packet of information contained an Action Plan for Academic Achievement. Goal One: All students will meet state standards in reading and mathematics. Goal Two: Align all course work and monitor student achievement toward State Standards and Stanford Aptitude test, ninth edition.

The school scored a little lower on the 2000 achievement test than anticipated. Thus, freshman and sophomore students who scored below a certain percentile will be taking a double course in reading and mathematics until they can achieve a higher score. Five additional teachers have been hired to teach these courses.

In March 1999 State policy makers established an exit examination, which students must pass before they can receive their high school diplomas. This law will affect the 2001 freshman class. The exit examination is not a college or honor examination. Instead, its purpose is to test whether students have mastered the academic skills needed in the adult world.

Renovation of the school has been ongoing since 1997.

1. A warehouse has been converted into a Presentation Center, seating 200.
2. Six new modular classrooms were added to the campus and will remain permanently.
3. The science room and business wing have been refurbished.
4. All school restrooms have been remodeled and are now handicapped accessible.
5. Classrooms are individually climate controlled.
6. A new Events Center is under construction. It will be a multi-purpose facility to be used for ball games, presentations and community events.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

The school has an excellent master plan, and the Grand Jury will enjoy watching its progress.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kettleman City Elementary School
and Adelante Continuation School
General Petroleum Street
P.O. Box 248
Kettleman City CA 93239
(559) 386-5702

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
October, 6,2000

INTRODUCTION:

Kettleman City Elementary School and Adelante Continuation School are two schools in the Reef-Sunset Unified School District. Reef-Sunset demographics are similar to many rural farming communities. Nearly 80 percent of the students speak English as their second language.

Kettleman City Elementary opened in the 1930's. Currently there are 304 students enrolled. There are two kindergartens, two first grades, two second grades, one third grade, one third/fourth grade, one fourth grade, one fourth/fifth grade, one fifth grade, one physical/health class, one sixth/science class and one seventh/language arts class, one eighth/social science class, one eighth/mathematics class. There is a Special Day Class and a Resource Specialist. There are fourteen teachers, including two special education teachers.

Adelante Continuation School shares the same campus. There are nine students, a teacher and aide.

Both schools are on the United States Department of Agriculture free lunch program. All students are given free breakfasts and lunches. The kitchen staff has received several awards from the County Health Department for cleanliness, presentation and taste.

FINDINGS:

All classrooms are air conditioned and handicapped-accessible. In order to meet the state-mandated requirement of having no more than 20 students per class in the lower grades, one portable classroom has been brought on-site for an additional class.

The elementary school is the focal point of Kettleman City. It is used for community meetings, programs and sporting events. The community strongly supports its school by volunteering and participating in numerous activities. The Deputy Sheriff visits the campus almost daily to interact with the students.

All classrooms and the library are equipped with computers. All have access to the internet, which provides a wealth of information. Chemwaste, Paramount Farms and the Avenal Prison System have donated this equipment. The school has received numerous grants, which have been used for new computers, software, camcorders, cameras and school uniforms.

When the committee visited, the grounds and buildings were immaculate. The classrooms are neat and well decorated and children's work was displayed. The school library has an excellent stock of books and materials.

In order to qualify for special funds, the school's overall scores on the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT), the Academic Performance Index (API), and the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE) had to improve at least five percent over the previous year. The scores improved eight percent this year. The school will be receiving money awards at the end of the 2001 school year. The money may be used for anything except salaries.

The school offers an adult literacy program that enables parents to help their children at home. A Saturday school is available for students who need additional help and after-school supervision is provided daily until 6:00 P.M., which gives latchkey children a safe place to study. Finally tutors are available.

RECOMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury was impressed with the support this school receives from the community and area businesses.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Reef-Sunset Middle School
608 N. First Street
Avenal, California 932204
(559) 386-4128

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Health and Education

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
October 6, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Reef-Sunset Middle School is a medium-sized school in Reef-Sunset Unified School District. It is located in Avenal. Its enrollment is 450 students, the majority of whom are Hispanic. The school was built in 1991-1992 and commands an impressive panoramic view of the neighboring foothills.

According to Reef-Sunset Unified School District's Accountability Report Card, the mission of the district is as follows: "To provide each unique student equal access to complete a diverse educational program in a safe and secure environment which will prepare the student to be competitive, successful and self-confident in post-secondary education or the career path of choice."

All students were assessed in the 1999-2000 school year using the Stanford Achievement Test Ninth Edition (SAT 9) and the Academic Performance Index (API). Each school must achieve at least a five percent improvement in its scores to be eligible for additional educational funds from the State. In the most recent testing for which results had been released at the time of our visit, this school achieved an increase of ten percent over the previous year.

Reef-Sunset Middle School has an annual operating budget of \$1.85 million, approximately \$4,250 per student. Additionally, the school receives \$189,703 for special programs, services and materials beyond the base program. The appropriate and effective use of this additional money is the responsibility of the School Site Council.

Literacy training has been made available to every Reef-Sunset School teacher through the Literacy Connection. Approximately 35 percent of the teachers have implemented the strategies presented by this training.

FINDINGS:

The Committee made an unannounced visit to the school to follow-up on recommendations made by last year's Grand Jury. The head custodian accompanied the Committee on a tour of the campus grounds and buildings.

We were met in the school office by the Vice Principal, who informed us that the Principal was not present that day. During this meeting, the Vice Principal told us that he had made a personal commitment to spending the majority of his time working one-on-one with students during all recess and lunch periods, as well as before and after school. His hope was to instill in them a sense of individual and school pride, to teach manners and to eliminate the gang element he found when first assigned to this school.

It appeared to us that there was minimal, if any, gang influence on this campus. The Committee observed that the students coming into the office were very polite and well-mannered. Student morale was high and the grounds were neat and trash-free.

The Principal has set up a policy of closing down the snack bar for a couple of days if trash is found on the grounds or left in the classrooms.

The school has obtained grant money from Paramount Farms, and expects to receive another grant soon from the same source. The school has submitted a grant request to "Jordan Fundamentals," a source of funding set up by basketball star Michael Jordan. The funds will be used to purchase more classroom computers. An additional goal is to purchase musical instruments, especially drums, to form a school band.

The Committee discussed last year's Grand Jury recommendations with the Vice Principal. He told us that a number of the recommendations have been implemented, including planting new trees along the North side of the school, donated by Avenal State Prison. The School administration hopes to obtain a portable building that can be used as a dining room, and thus eliminate the use of the gymnasium as a cafeteria. The school has received funds for a water well, recommended by the previous Grand Jury. However, it has not yet been installed.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Obtain a portable building to be used as a student dining room.

COMMENTS: None

SUMMARY

Health and Education Committee

The Health and Education Committee has had a very busy year from our swearing in to the end of our term. Following up on previous recommendations was our first responsibility, which took our Committee all over Kings County to the farthest point of the County line. We were re-educated about our public schools and what is required for schools to run these days. Our Committee also visited facilities that had not been visited for several years.

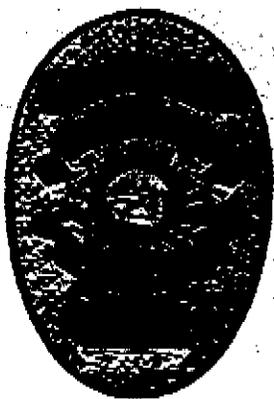
Our Committee spent 46 hours investigating citizen complaints. These hours will not be reflected in the Final Report. We visited numerous schools, one hospital, three Senior Centers and The Public Health Department. Some of our visits were announced and some were not.

My appreciation goes to my Committee for the hard work, long hours and travel time it took to complete the task given to us by the court. The members of the Health and Education Committee created a real team effort as part of 2000-2001 Grand Jury.

Rhonda Hakker, Chairperson
Philip Wintz, Assistant Chairperson
Eldora Trigueiro
Leonard Silva
Leon Garrone
Nancy Blanken
Elizabeth Nail



Law and Public Safety



AREA OF INQUIRY:

Avenal State Prison
One Kings Way
Avenal, CA 93204
(559) 386-0587

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
September 22, 2000

INTRODUCTON:

Avenal State Prison (ASP) was the first institution constructed during the "Prison Growth Era" of the 1980's and 1990's. It was the first prison solicited by a local community and is located on the former site of the Tachi tribe of Yokuts Indians. When it opened in 1987, ASP was the first all-new prison built in California in twenty years. The institution was originally known as California State Prison Avenal. On February 22, 1988, it was officially named Avenal State Prison.

ASP is a Level II institution that originally had 17 dormitory housing units for general population inmates. It was designed for a capacity of 2,320 inmates. Due to the large influx of felons committed to the California Department of Corrections in recent years, the institution was enlarged to the current capacity of 6,629 beds. The inmate population has continued to grow and six two-hundred-bed dormitories have been built, one on each facility, to alleviate overcrowding. When in full occupancy, ASP will house 7,829 inmates.

FINDINGS:

We especially enjoyed visiting the industries on our tour of ASP. First was the poultry processing plant. The prison formerly raised its own chickens, but it has become more economical to purchase local chickens already dressed. The poultry processing plant runs two shifts to process fryers, quick freeze them and then ship them to other state institutions. A recent innovation has been the introduction of boneless chicken strips, which can be served stir-fried with various seasonings.

Next we toured the egg production facility. It has multiple barns of egg-laying hens and produces shell eggs, frozen egg product and fresh egg product for California Department of Corrections institutions. We found the barn we visited surprisingly clean, and the chickens well-cared for. The supervisor told us that every egg is inspected by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, a more stringent inspection schedule than commonly used for supermarket eggs. We learned about a relatively new product, a form of liquid fresh eggs that keeps for weeks.

Probably the most impressive part of our tour of inmate industry was the wood production enterprise. The wood production enterprise trains inmates to use state-of-the-

art furniture manufacturing equipment. We were impressed with the complexity of the equipment and the professionalism of the inmates who operate it. The end products, beautiful desks, tables, chairs and countertops, are sold to other agencies.

There are also a number of vocational programs at Avenal State Prison. We visited the Vocational Autobody Upholstery and Vocational Autobody Training programs. Participants learn their craft from beginning to end, rather than concentrating on a single phase. This makes them more employable when they leave the prison.

The Arts in Corrections Program at Avenal is supervised by an Artist Facilitator, and individual art instructors working under contract. Two inmates are assigned to work in the classroom. The following programs are available to inmates: visual art classes, including abstract painting, printmaking, drawing and ceramics; music classes, including the guitar, harmonica, choral music and drama; and literary classes, including poetry and prose. Artwork created by prison inmates in these programs is offered to the public at special sales; some of it is displayed at state government buildings.

On our tour, we passed through the exercise yard and observed two housing units. We observed inmates watching television, ironing, and playing cards. Overall both dormitories were neat and clean, and the prisoners seemed well-behaved.

Finally, we visited the infirmary, which has twenty eight beds, with facilities for isolation and administrative segregation. The infirmary operates on a 24-hour basis. Important surgical procedures are performed at contracting facilities outside prison walls.

The highlight of our trip was an excellent lunch prepared by inmates. We enjoyed the company of the Interim Warden and her staff while sampling several varieties of chicken strips processed at the prison. We were told that the prisoners were fed the same food, including chocolate eclairs for dessert.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury was impressed with the friendly staff and the overall atmosphere of respect on behalf of both staff and inmates. Our thanks go to the Administration of the prison who allowed inmates to produce the covers of our Final Report and those inmates who participated.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

California State Prison-Corcoran
3001 Kings Ave.
Corcoran, CA 93212
(555) 992-8800

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
October 12, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

California State Prison -Corcoran (CSP- Corcoran) is located in Kings County near the City of Corcoran. CSP- Corcoran is built on the site of Tulare Lake, on land that once belonged to the Tachi Tribe of Native Americans. The prison grounds cover 942 acres, with 63 acres fenced. The prison facility itself consists of 1,678,000 square feet.

CSP-Corcoran houses its inmates at three levels of security: Level I, where inmates are allowed to leave the prison on work details and similar assignments; Level III, where prisoners are allowed to leave the immediate vicinity of their cells to take part in vocational training and other schooling, but not to leave the prison itself; Level IV, where prisoners are too violent to be released into the general prison population. Level IV prisoners are housed in Security Housing Units (SHU). Level I consists of a camp-type setting with dormitories. Level III cells are six feet by 11 feet. Level IV cells are slightly larger (6.5 feet by 12.5 feet) because the inmates are confined to them most of the time. These cells are in the SHU. The total living space for prisoners is approximately 656,348 square feet.

Like other modern California State Prisons, CSP-Corcoran is circular in design, so that if problems with inmates arise, security personnel can respond quickly to all areas. The electrified fences at CSP - Corcoran are powerful enough to deter any attempt to escape over the fence. Seventy-two amperes is enough to kill; the fence at CSP-Corcoran has 675 amperes.

CSP - Corcoran presently employs 1723 people. Of these, 1160 are correctional employees and 563 are ancillary or support. The annual budget is \$117,500,000. The monthly payroll is \$6.2 million dollars. Of this, approximately \$3.2 million dollars is spent in Kings County.

Many vocational skills are taught to level III inmates at CSP - Corcoran, such as dry cleaning, upholstery repair, woodworking, computer, electronics, electrical maintenance, and automotive trades. Inmates who have attained journeyman level of a trade are paid a small hourly wage. Items made in these classes are sold, and the proceeds go into a fund to pay the instructors and purchase materials.

Each inmate is provided three meals per day, two hot meals and one sack lunch. This totals approximately 3,200 calories per day. The daily cost is \$2.43 per inmate.

CSP – Corcoran has a 96-bed acute-care hospital with two emergency rooms and two operating rooms. It covers 65,000 square feet and cost \$20 million to build. Inmates that cannot be treated at the prison where they are incarcerated are taken to CSP-Corcoran for medical care.

FINDINGS:

The Committee met with the Warden at CSP-Corcoran for a presentation on the prison and its policies. CSP- Corcoran, like all California State Prisons, has a no hostage policy. This policy means that if visitors are taken hostage, the prison staff will not bargain with inmates for them.

The Committee was extremely impressed with the new Warden and his administrative assistants. The new Warden has been employed by the California prison system for over 20 years. The officers run and control the prison. However, according to the Warden, if any officer mistreats or abuses his power over inmates he is disciplined immediately. He stated he has a no-nonsense policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury was most impressed with the how well CSP – Corcoran operates, especially considering the high-risk inmates that are housed there.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

California Substance Abuse
Treatment Facility and
State Prison at Corcoran
900 Quebec Ave.
Corcoran, CA 93212
(559) 992-7100

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
October 12, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The mission of California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and State Prison at Corcoran (CSATF/SP) is to provide long-term housing and services for men who have been convicted of felonies and remanded to the state for incarceration and also to provide intensive substance abuse treatment for inmates.

Ground breaking on CSATF/SP began in May 1995; activation of the finished facility took place August 4, 1997. It was the thirty-third prison built in California. Due to space limitations, this institution was built in a rectangular configuration, departing from the "New Prison" concept. The New Prison concept places units in an array around a central administrative unit so that problems with inmates can be dealt with in a timely fashion.

CSATF/SP building design is set up in four clusters, each with a central hub that allows greater security. Each cluster has group meeting rooms, counselor offices, classrooms and two separate tiers of six four-man dorms.

Inmates requiring treatment in the areas of mental health, in-patient care and respiratory illnesses are housed in 40 individualized rooms in the correctional treatment center.

CSATF/SP Corcoran has the largest substance abuse treatment facility in the United States. It covers 280 acres and 1,600,000 square feet with a perimeter of 2.8 miles of electrified fence. Inmates are confined in all four levels of security-from minimum to maximum. Currently there are 6,295 inmates and 1,426 employees. The facility was designed to hold 3,324 inmates. It is projected to have 7,500 in the near future.

FINDINGS:

The Warden and his Administrative Assistant briefed the Committee concerning the operations of the facility and treatment of inmates. We learned a separate area is provided for geriatric inmates, the handicapped and weaker prisoners suffering from various diseases.

Two contractors provide drug and substance abuse treatment: Walden House, Inc. and Phoenix House of California. Counseling is available seven days a week in various fields of treatment. CSATF/SP provides a comprehensive six-to-eighteen month program to inmates with a minimum of twenty hours of treatment per week for each inmate. The drug treatment program at CSATF/SP consists of four phases: Orientation, Therapeutic Community, Pre-reentry and Aftercare.

Inmates participate in a broad range of programming each day:

1. Individual and group substance abuse counseling
2. Relapse prevention education
3. Living skills workshop
4. Anger management
5. Family services programming
6. Changing criminal thought processes
7. Discharge/exit treatment planning
8. Re-entry planning
9. Pre-vocational and vocational services
10. HIV/AIDS Education
11. Random urinalysis
12. Twelve step support groups

Vocational education and training in many fields are offered to inmates to learn trades that will benefit them upon release from prison. There are 22 different trades offered.

The Committee did learn of one problem at CSATF/S. Due to the great distances between facilities, correctional personnel find it difficult to get to areas that need immediate attention. The maximum distance from one end of CSATF/SP is 1.3 miles. This may present a problem when immediate medical assistance is needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury thanks the personnel of CSAT/SP for an interesting and informative tour.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kit Carson Fire Station #3
9522 6th Ave.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-4042

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
April 12, 2001
Interview
April 19, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Kit Carson Fire Station is located on 6th Avenue in Kings County. The property is owned by a local landowner and leased to the County for one dollar a year. The station was built by firefighters in the 1940s. The main building is comprised of living quarters, office, engine room and volunteer meeting room. A one ton grass-fire truck, which also responds to rescue and medical aid calls, is housed in the main building. In a separate building to the north is a pumper tanker.

The station is manned alternately by a Captain or an Engineer. The station also has a compliment of volunteers on call for fire fighting duties. Like all firefighters in Kings County, these professionals must be qualified in basic life support skills.

FINDINGS:

The Committee made an unannounced visit to the Kit Carson Fire Station to follow up on the 1999-2000 Grand Jury's findings. Immediately we saw that the Station looks every bit of its fifty-some years. The walls were cracked and the wood trim on the entire building was weather beaten. Some paint would go a long way towards improving its appearance. On a more positive note, the entire station was well tended. It looked like the lawn had been just mowed. Even the pump house had a flower border.

The rooftop air conditioner was our primary reason for visiting because the 1999-2000 Grand Jury felt it lacked sufficient support. Our Committee found the air conditioner mounted on a welded angled iron support that appears to be stable.

On a subsequent date, the Kings County Fire Chief came to the Grand Jury Chambers at our invitation to answer some questions that had arisen from our tour of the Kit Carson Fire Station.

First we asked him if the Kit Carson Fire Station was going to be replaced in the near future. The Fire Chief replied that there were definite plans under way to combine the Kit Carson and Guernsey Fire Stations in a new station to be located near Houston Avenue and Highway 43 and redistribute any duplicate equipment among the other fire stations.

He said he planned to ask for funding for this in the next budget, although the Board of Supervisors was already fully informed of the plans.

The Fire Chief told us that the Insurance Services Office (ISO) determined Kings County's insurance rates by evaluating the fire hazard, the availability of water and other factors. The areas in Kings County with fixed water resources improved their ISO ratings this year from 5 to 4.

When asked if there were any new products or equipment he would like to purchase for the Fire Department, the Chief said he had never found a product that made him say "wow" until he saw a demonstration of a new fire retardant foam called F-500. This product has the ability to extinguish class A or class B type fires quickly, which means that the Fire Department does not have to purchase two types of fire retardant foams. The Chief said he planned to purchase this new foam as soon as possible. He was also considering hosting a demonstration of the foam here in Kings County for Fire Chiefs across the state.

In response to our questions about the frequent loss of personnel to other fire departments offering higher pay, the Chief said it was continuing. The County has lost 16 engineers in the last three years. He also mentioned that the Fire Department's goal was to have all stations manned by at least two persons.

In reviewing past Grand Jury Final Reports, the Committee found mention of exactly the same problems with Kit Carson Fire Station as far back as the 1992-1993 report. We have been told that the west wall of the Station was damaged in the 1983 Coalinga earthquake. Grand Juries have been recommending that the Fire Station be replaced since 1994. It is time—indeed, past time—for this building to be replaced without delay.

A separate consideration involves how to replace the Station. Current plans call for combining both fire stations and replacing them with one about five miles from Kit Carson Fire Station and about eight miles from Guernsey Fire Station. The Committee is concerned that the County may not have adequate fire protection in this event. We note that Kit Carson Station made over 500 emergency responses in 2000. Can the new Fire Station answer calls in both districts in a timely manner? Aside from the added danger to residents in the east side of the County due to decreased coverage, fire ratings (and thus the cost of fire insurance) in that area are likely to increase.

Doing "more with less" may work well in interior decorating, but it leaves a lot to be desired when applied to a vital public service like fire protection. We feel that those who make the decisions should look at the decision to combine the two stations a second time to make sure that everyone in Kings County will get the quality fire protection they deserve.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Replace Kit Carson Fire Station.
2. Re-evaluate the decision to merge Guemsey and Kit Carson Fire Stations.
3. Purchase F-500 foam as soon as possible.

COMMENTS:

We appreciate the cordiality and positive attitude of the Engineer on duty at Kit Carson the day we visited. Our thanks go also to the County Fire Chief for his frank and informative responses to our questions.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Armona Fire Station #5
11235 14th Ave.
Armona, Ca. 93202
(559) 584-5206

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Tour and Interview
August 10, 2000
August 24, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Kings County Fire Station #5 is located in the community of Armona and serves the surrounding countryside. This station is one of the busiest in the county, having responded to 535 calls as of the day of our visit out of 2,200 for the entire county. Three fire trucks are assigned here: a new 2000 gallon pumper, an older fire engine, and an engine from the California Office of Emergency Services, which is kept in reserve.

The station is usually manned by two people, a Fire Captain and one Engineer. They are assisted by about thirteen volunteer firefighters, who are called via coded pager in the event of a fire or emergency. Volunteers are rated 1, 2, or 3, with 3 being the highest qualified. The ratings are determined by training, experience, and performance evaluations and require periodic re-certification. Drills and performance tests are held regularly to ensure that proficiency is maintained. A minimum of six months of volunteer experience is required before a person can be considered for a permanent position.

FINDINGS:

The Committee visited the fire station unannounced and was given a tour by an Engineer on rotating duty, who said he was not familiar with the station. We met with the Fire Captain in the Grand Jury room later to clarify some questions.

We started our tour with the fire station grounds. The grounds were clean and neat with nice landscaping all around. It is evident that the staff takes pride in their workplace. Adult offenders sometimes satisfy their community service requirements by weeding, picking up trash, cleaning windows, etc. They are logged in and out by firemen at the station. It is assumed that their work is interrupted when the firefighters are responding to an alarm, since the facility must be locked in the absence of staff.

The Engineer conducting the tour pointed out a dead tree that would have to be removed. He said this was the second mountain pine they had lost and speculated that it might be something in the soil that this type of tree cannot tolerate.

The bays where the trucks were parked were very clean, as were the trucks themselves. A new air service station was recently installed and is now in use. It is used for purging and charging air bottles and other operations where clean air is required. This station is currently servicing air bottles and equipment for the entire county.

There is a hose drying facility here that is also used by most of county. The hoses must be cleaned and thoroughly dried after each use to prevent mold.

In contrast to the fire station grounds, the living area is in need of renovation. The major deficiency is that one of the two showers is out of order. Also, the sink faucet is dripping. Ceilings, walls, and door facings need repair and paint. Additionally, the carpeting is stained, threadbare, and torn. When we discussed these matters with the Fire Captain, he told us that replacement carpeting was in the budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Remove the dead tree.
2. Replace the carpets.
3. Repair the shower and sink faucet.
4. Repair and paint the ceilings, walls and door facings.

COMMENTS: None

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Corcoran Fire Station # 11
1033 Chittenden Ave
Corcoran, CA.93212
(559) 992-2156

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
October 26, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Kings County Fire Station #11 in Corcoran is a two-story building that stands next to City Hall on Chittenden Ave. The Fire Station has one 1978 and two 1996 Triple Combination Pumpers. Each carries 750 gallons of water, a 24-foot extension ladder and a compliment of hose. The station also has a Squad Unit equipped for grass fires and emergency medical calls.

Upstairs the fire station houses ambulance service personnel, as well as a full weight room with a wide variety of fitness equipment offering firefighters the opportunity to keep fit.

The station is staffed by two Engineers, one Captain for each shift and one Battalion Chief. One Engineer does all the sewing for the County, making and repairing covers, tarps and bags. At the time of our visit, the fire station had ten volunteer firefighters and applications for two more.

FINDINGS:

The Committee made an unannounced visit to the Corcoran Fire Station. When we arrived, the firefighters were in the process of washing down the pumper trucks and hoses following a fire call. We spoke with the Captain and the Battalion Chief, whose main office is at the Corcoran Station.

The Corcoran Fire Department has an active program to encourage fire prevention. First it has initiated a demonstration called the "National Fire Prevention Program." During October, children in kindergarten through third grade see a demonstration that shows how rapidly a house can burn down. A model house complete with furniture and toys, burns in five minutes or less. About 1,100 school children attend these expensive demonstrations, which are paid for by donations from different organizations, and well worth it. Besides building great rapport between the children and firefighters, the demonstration teaches fire awareness. Fire Station #11 has been honored by the California State Assembly and the California State Senate in recognition of the contribution made by this program to public safety and fire prevention awareness. Also, like many other fire stations, this station provides a program of installing free smoke detectors upon citizen request.

The Committee learned that this station is a busy one. As of the date of our visit, the Corcoran Fire Department had responded to 667 calls for the year, among them 328 medical, 26 structure and 21 vehicle calls.

When asked what the fire station personnel needed most, the Battalion Chief expressed a need for a ladder truck able to extend to a height beyond two stories.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Obtain a Ladder Truck able to extend to a height beyond two stories.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury is impressed with the "National Fire Prevention Program."

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Corcoran Police Department
1031 Chittenden Ave.
Corcoran, CA 93212
(559) 992-5151

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Interview and Informational Tour
October 20, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The Corcoran Police Department is located in downtown Corcoran sandwiched between City Hall and the Corcoran Council Chambers. The Department has 17 sworn officers, 8 non-sworn (4 full time and 4 part time) and 2 administrative aides. After several years of turmoil, the Corcoran Police Department has a new Police Chief, the youngest in the state.

FINDINGS:

The Committee visited the Corcoran Police Department to meet the Police Chief and learn about his policies and innovations. We were ushered into the break room and introduced to the Police Chief and two commanders. There they explained some of their current programs which include:

Personalized Patrol Vehicle Program – At the time of our visit the Department had 6 new Ford Interceptor squad cars already assigned to officers and planed to have a total of 15 squad cars assigned by the end of the year 2000.

OPERATION T.R.A.C.I - (To Rescue Abducted Children Immediately) This program is designed to provide Corcoran Police Department with the best possible chance of rescuing a victim of an abduction as quickly as possible. It provides a consistent protocol for the first responders and investigators to follow which will ensure that a diligent, systematic investigation is conducted in the crucial first moments following a confirmed report of an abduction.

The Bridge Program - This program is designed to enhance relations between police and Corcoran's youth. Students receive an overview of what police work is really like. A miniature version of the police training academy, Bridge Academy, provides classroom training in subjects varying from criminal law to the use of deadly force. Participants receive training in developing latent fingerprints, surveillance equipment, evidence collection, firearms and working with police. Each member of the class is invited to ride along with an officer.

Crime Free Multi-housing Program - This program is designed to assist the community by forming a coalition of those committed to a safer environment. Law enforcement, businesses, apartment managers and tenants, and residents of mobile home parks participate.

Gangs: Drawing the Line - This program teaches comprehensive approaches to prevention, intervention and suppression of gangs.

Safe Streets - This is a community mobilization tool that empowers neighbors to rid the community of drug houses, gang houses and houses constituting a public nuisance. Participants learn how to channel their strengths into an effective action plan to reclaim their neighborhoods from criminals in a safe, fast, effective and economical manner.

Senior Safety - This program is designed to educate senior citizens and provide them the tools necessary to avoid becoming victims of criminal activity. It offers tips and suggestions for preventing crimes, such as robbery, burglary and car theft.

When we asked the Police Chief if he had any special wishes for the Department, he responded with a list of several items. First on the list was the Dispatch Center, which poses several problems. First, the location is exposed to public view and hearing. Anyone coming into the police station can see sensitive information on the Dispatch computers and overhear police calls. This problem could be solved by switching the areas for Dispatch to Records. Second, the equipment in the Dispatch Center is antiquated. The Dictaphone, the equipment that records all telephone calls that come into Dispatch, is in immediate need of replacement.

The Chief would also like to implement a City Watch program similar to those used by other cities. This program calls up to twelve citizens at one time to alert them of criminal activity. For this, the Department will need more phone lines.

The Commander informed us with considerable pride that the Department has received a grant for live scan fingerprint equipment, which takes fingerprints and correlates them with State and Federal records to see if the person being fingerprinted has a criminal record or outstanding warrants. The Commander expected to have this equipment by January 2001.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Exchange locations between Records and Dispatch.
2. Replace Dispatch equipment.
3. Have more telephone lines installed.

COMMENTS:

It appeared to the Grand Jury that morale in the Department is greatly improved. The Grand Jury feels this young Police Chief has the ability to bring the Department up to a standard of professionalism comparable to others in the state.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kings County Probation Department
1424 Forum Drive
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211 ext. 2970

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Interviews and Tours
December 28, 2000
January 25, 2001
February 15, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

The Kings County Probation Department's stated goal is to provide offenders with a program that acknowledges a need for structure, discipline, security and accountability in the face of today's growing crime rate. The Probation Department handles about 4,000 probationers, divided almost equally between adults and juveniles. The Chief Probation Officer is appointed by the Superior Court Judges of Kings County and heads a staff of 134.

Kings County Probation Department consists of two divisions: the Juvenile Institutions Division and the Probation Division. The Juvenile Institutions Division consists of Boot Camp, the Female Treatment Center, the Juvenile Center, and J. C. Montgomery School. The grounds are maintained and cleaned by the wards.

Boot Camp/Female Treatment Center

Boot Camp and the Female Treatment Center are located in the east side of the Probation Department campus. Female wards at the Female Treatment Center are housed in their own quarters, a new modular dormitory opened in July 2000. The dormitory consists of a fifteen bunk open bay, a centralized class area equipped with desks and study materials, showers and restrooms. Male and female wards are kept separate except during breakfast, lunch and school hours.

J.C. Montgomery School

While in custody at the Juvenile Center, the minors attend school on a daily basis year round. The school is staffed with five teachers, who in addition to the standard school curriculum, provide vocational training. Four classrooms are located at the Boot Camp. They provide learning facilities for Boot Camp, Female Treatment Center and home detention wards. Two additional classrooms dedicated to students in detention are located within the walls of the Juvenile Center.

Juvenile Center

The Juvenile Center is a locked secure facility that incarcerates an average of 60 juvenile offenders 24 hours a day. It is divided into three areas. First, the central intake area contains the booking desk, office spaces, storage and cells for mentally ill wards or others that need to be held separately. Second, the 100 unit holds non-violent offenders two to a cell. Third, the 200 unit holds violent offenders one to a cell. Each unit has its own dayroom. There is also a recreation area with basketball hoops north of the building.

FINDINGS:

At 8:00 A.M. sharp, December 28, 2000, the Committee observed the flag raising ceremony presented in front of the Administration Building in the Government Center by wards of the Female Treatment Center. Later, the Committee toured the Juvenile Institutions Division, including the Juvenile Center and J. C. Montgomery School. The Center is at full capacity and needs more space.

The Committee devoted most of its time to the Female Treatment Center and Boot Camp. At the time we visited, thirteen females between the ages of thirteen and eighteen were living in the Female Treatment Center dormitory. Boot Camp houses up to 35 young men in two cinder block dormitories. The program usually has a waiting list of young offenders. We were impressed with the effort devoted to rehabilitating these young people.

Both programs follow a similar paramilitary type format. Participants proceed through three stages of training. Stage 1, suppression level, is designed to break down negative behaviors and attitudes and instill responsibility. Participants must live on the compound for the 90-day duration of this stage. They receive training in an intensive correctional program which includes military protocol, therapeutic intervention, education, vocational training and family involvement. Stage 2, intervention level, is a 60-day program that allows participants to progress through three levels of responsibility and privileges. Those in Level I are able to earn weekend furloughs based on positive behavior. Level II wards may be promoted to honor stage after 30 days in the program. Wards at this level are released to go home for a limited period of time Monday through Friday and, on special occasions, weekends, but must wear a monitoring device. Wards at Level III, prevention level, live at home, but continue attending classes and other training on the compound. Female wards must report to the Deputy Officer assigned to them at least twice weekly (four times weekly for male wards) and submit to two random drug tests monthly. After completion of these programs, each participant can still attend all the classes and programs available and has the option of contacting staff members in time of need.

According to the staff, many of the female wards are victims of incest, rape or date rape, although they seldom volunteer the information. Staff members feel this might be the root cause of the misbehavior that led to being incarcerated. While the staff feels compassion for this situation, they say they teach these youngsters that, no matter their life circumstances, "If you do the crime, you've got to do the time."

The Committee was informed that both male and female wards are treated with firmness and are required to follow a strict code of ethics patterned after military service. The cadre strives to teach responsibility and accountability to these young people in order to redirect them to a positive attitude and healthy life. In doing so they instill self-esteem and leadership skills in their wards.

On a subsequent date the Committee met with the County Chief Probation Officer and one of his Deputies. The Chief gave us a thorough briefing on the Probation Department. Next, the Deputy led us on a tour of the Department and the grounds of the Juvenile Center. He called our attention to works of art, such as murals and stained glass projects, created by talented wards. One ward has even received special recognition for his art work.

Special mention should be made of the Deputy's idea of planting a vegetable garden and fruit trees to be maintained by wards. The long-term purpose of this program is to replace junk food in wards' diet with fresh fruit and vegetables.

The Deputy informed us of several problems facing the Probation Department. The Probation Department needs more space for employees, more staff and field officers to handle the increasing number of cases. He also expressed concern about after hours health care for Juvenile Center wards.

When asked what the Department's most pressing needs were, he stated that space for administration staff was at the top of the list. If funding could be obtained, there is room for expansion on the west side of the building. The Juvenile Center could be relocated to the Branch Jail when that facility is replaced, and Boot Camp could then be expanded into the building previously occupied by the Juvenile Center.

We invited the Deputy to come to the Grand Jury Chambers at a later date to tell us more about the problems the Probation Department has in providing what he considers adequate health care for the Department's juvenile wards. The Deputy explained that two licensed clinical mental health workers are on duty Monday through Friday 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Their services are shared among the Juvenile Center, the Female Treatment Center and Boot Camp. A psychiatrist visits once a week. This service is shared among the Main Jail, the Branch Jail, the Juvenile Center, the Female Treatment Center and Boot Camp.

In a later telephone conversation the Chief said the Probation Department's health services have improved greatly since the addition of a second mental health worker in January 2001. However, from this committee's point of view there seems to be continuing cause for concern. According to the Deputy, about 60 percent of incoming young offenders need mental health treatment. He said that a recent study conducted by the State of California Juvenile Institutions Division found that approximately 80 percent of their wards are in need of help with psychiatric issues and substance abuse. Twenty percent are in need of immediate treatment. He explained that most of these youngsters are treated in "dual design" programs that combine medical and mental services.

Young people entering the Juvenile Center go through a prescribed booking procedure that includes a medical screening by the staff. They are asked about current medications and health problems, including mental health. The following day a nurse reviews this information and takes appropriate action. Nurses are available 8 A.M. to 5 P.M., Monday through Friday. They have offices at the Main Jail, Branch Jail, Juvenile Center and Boot Camp. The nurse refers youngsters needing mental health evaluation to the mental health workers or psychiatrist. According to the Deputy about 50 percent of those referred are new to the Mental Health system.

If mental health problems arise after hours, the options available to the Juvenile Center Staff are limited. If a youngster is suicidal, the staff is authorized to telephone the on-call mental health worker. A violent offender must be taken to the hospital for assessment. Both these options present difficulties.

The first difficulty is that, under this system, limited psychiatric care at night and on weekends leaves the responsibility of determining just how sick the individual is to the Juvenile Center staff, who have no training in medical or mental health. Another aspect of this is that staff members might mistakenly punish mentally ill detainees, like anorexics or self-mutilators, for behaviors beyond their control. Taken together, these two factors leave the County liable if someone commits suicide or is otherwise injured.

A second difficulty is that inmates' mental problems arise 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For example, a mentally ill adolescent who is not showing obvious symptoms and has not been treated by the County Mental Health system, could come into custody on Thursday afternoon and go untreated until the next psychiatrist's visit on the following Wednesday, if at all.

The third difficulty arises when a ward of the Juvenile Division must be taken to the hospital. When a youngster says they are sick and there is no nurse on duty, they must be taken to the hospital for evaluation. This requires two probation officers that are either taken away from their duties or called in for overtime. The Division must pay for ambulance services and emergency room fees, as well as overtime wages for probation officers. The Deputy feels that these medical services are costly, yet inadequate. He stated that the County has been lucky so far in escaping liability lawsuits resulting from the injury or death of a young ward.

The Deputy feels the Juvenile Center needs its own public health nurse to dispense and supervise all medications. He feels it is imperative to have a psychologist or psychiatrist available at least eight hours a day, seven days a week. Additional needs in this area include group and individual counseling for anger management, depression, suicidal thoughts, self-mutilation and bulimia. Finally, Juvenile Center staff needs training in identifying and dealing with inmates who are physically or mentally ill.

This Committee wishes to make it clear that there is a system in place for treating juveniles incarcerated in Kings County. We recognize that the system usually works well

for individuals who are already enrolled in the County's Health Department or Mental Health treatment system. Also, others needing care during business hours or displaying obvious signs of serious illness most likely will receive it. Our concern is that some people may not receive the treatment they need at the time they need it because they are not already enrolled in the system or because their symptoms go unrecognized by the center's staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Relocate the Juvenile Center to the maximum security section of the Branch County Jail when a new jail facility is built.
2. Relocate the Probation Department to gain more employee space and hire extra staff and field officers as soon as the budget allows.
3. Set up a staff training program in identifying and dealing with mental health issues.
4. Investigate ways of funding additional medical and psychiatric staff and instituting a counseling program.
5. Institute a cost analysis study that tallies the total cost of relying on the emergency room for after hours medical care, to include ambulance, emergency room fees and staff overtime. This should be compared with the projected cost of hiring medical staff 24 hours a day.

COMMENTS:

Our thanks go to the Probation Department personnel for their empathy and compassion expressed in working with juvenile and adult probationers.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kings County Sheriff's Department
1444 W. Lacey Blvd.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211 ext. 2993

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
August 17, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Kings County Jail is divided into two separate facilities, the main jail and the branch jail. The total population allowed by the State Board of Corrections is 296 inmates. The current jail population has surpassed that number. This is a combination of sentenced and non-sentenced prisoners. Anyone sentenced to more than one year is sent to State Prison. If the jail population exceeds the state mandated cap of 296, Federal authorities can intervene and release prisoners on the basis of first in, first out regardless of the crimes that were committed.

To avoid this the sheriff is maintaining the jail population within state-mandated parameters by early release and alternative sentencing programs on non-violent offenders. In 1999 a total of 3,142 inmates participated in the following alternative sentencing programs:

1. Electronic Monitoring	648
2. Adult Offender Work Program	810
3. Community Services	1070
4. Weekend Work Program	456
5. Work Furlough	158

FINDINGS:

The Committee visited the Kings County Sheriff's Department to meet with the Sheriff and tour the jail facilities. We were highly impressed with the people who manage it. Built in 1964, the main jail is aging, overcrowded, and in obvious need of replacement. It does not meet current earthquake standards. Despite state and federal mandates, its population was 380 on the day we visited and reached an all time high of over 400 by mid-September. We concluded that this jail is totally inadequate to meet the needs of Kings County in the twenty first century.

There is only one cell to accommodate handicapped prisoners and insufficient isolation cells for inmates that are too dangerous to be with other inmates. The jail needs a larger block of isolation cells and a modern floor plan to allow more efficient monitoring of prisoners, including those in isolation and the general population.

Because there are no classrooms, inmates in the main jail have limited opportunity to participate in educational, religious and rehabilitation programs. On our tour we saw two religious classes being conducted, one in a small visitation room and the other in the jail corridor.

According to the Sheriff the current facility is too small, old and outdated to be remodeled. Enlarging the jail and making necessary repairs is not financially feasible. The only solution is to build a new jail.

The branch jail, located some distance from the main jail, was built in 1984 with a federal grant to house minimum security prisoners. Recent legislation has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of prisoners requiring maximum security accommodations, so the branch jail has been retrofitted to meet this need.

A new addition, opened in 1999, is designed to hold the most violent offenders. The Committee was impressed with the efficient design of the new addition, which enables one officer to monitor the entire area from a control room. It was designed to meet state standards for juvenile detention centers, so it could be turned over to the Kings County Probation Department when a new jail is built.

This section of the jail has the facilities to offer opportunities to inmates who wish to improve themselves. Current programs include: Bible study, independent study, high school completion through the General Education Diploma program (GED), Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and drug and alcohol therapy.

The Sheriff is currently seeking solutions to health related problems. He feels the jail needs a 24 hour on-site nurse and the capability to perform psychiatric evaluations more than one day a week.

There is one nurse present during the day to administer medications and determine whether inmates need further medical treatment. A doctor is on call to advise the nurse in making these decisions. If prisoners complain of medical problems during the night, however deputies must take them to the emergency room, resulting in reduced manpower at the jail. A nurse on site 24 hours a day would solve this problem.

Newly arriving inmates who are mentally ill are not allowed to have any medication until they have been evaluated, even medication prescribed by their own doctor. According to the Sheriff, the Kings County Health Director refuses to allow county nurses on duty in the jail to evaluate mentally ill patients. Currently the psychiatrist under contract to the jail resides out of town and visits the jail only once a week. Severely affected individuals must be kept in safety cells and restrained for their own protection until they can see the psychiatrist and get their medication. The Committee feels this situation is unfair and unnecessary, not only to the mentally ill persons in custody, but also to the staff who must deal with them. If the on duty nurse had the authority to refer mentally ill patients,

psychiatric evaluation and treatment could be made on an on-going basis. Contracting with local psychiatric personnel would allow more timely care and treatment.

The Sheriff has joined with County Administration, the Chief Probation Officer, members of the Board of Supervisors and a citizens advisory/action committee in seeking funds to construct a new Kings County Jail which would also include Sheriff's Administration, Sheriff's Operations and a Dispatch Center. The construction of a new facility would have several direct benefits.

1. The new jail will have an increase in bed space and new utilities, as well as a more efficient design, more isolation cells and handicapped access.
2. The Branch Jail will be turned over to Probation for additional juvenile inmate housing.
3. The old Main Jail will be demolished, freeing up the property for development.
4. Combining the Sheriff's Department Divisions into one facility will increase efficiency.

A limited term .5 percent sales tax for eight years has been proposed to fund the new jail. It is expected to appear on the March 2001 ballot.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Replace the current jail with a larger one that meets earthquake standards.
2. Have a nurse on duty at the jail 24 hours a day.
3. The nurse should have the authority to determine if an inmate needs immediate psychiatric assistance.
4. Psychiatric evaluation should be available more than one day a week.

COMMENTS:

We agree with the Sheriff's suggestion that the County institute a limited term .5 percent sales tax for eight years to fund a new jail, so long as the proceeds from this tax are used solely for the purpose of constructing the jail. Kings County desperately needs a new jail, and this appears to be the only way we will ever get one.

The staff of both facilities is noteworthy for its professionalism and service to the citizens of Kings County.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Kings County Sheriff's Department
Followup
1444 W. Lacey Blvd
Hanford, Ca.93230
(559) 582-3211 ext. 2993

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Follow up report
April 26, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

As required by law, the Health Officer/Director of the Kings County Department of Public Health and the Kings County Administrator/Mental Health Director issued responses to the Grand Jury Report on the Kings County Sheriff's Department issued January 18, 2001. Copies of these responses can be found at the end of this report. Neither responder agreed with our findings pertaining to medical services in the Kings County Jail.

The Health Department Director disagreed with the portion of our findings that the on-duty nurse does not have the authority to refer mental health patients who do not have a current mental health file at Kings County Mental Health for psychiatric evaluation and treatment, while agreeing with our recommendation that a nurse ought to be on duty at the jail 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Additionally, the Health Director finds fault with the comment attributed to the Sheriff that the Kings County Health Director refuses to allow county nurses on duty in the jail to evaluate mentally ill patients. He also writes that the Sheriff states that the comment attributed to him was not made by him.

In his response, The County Administrator/Mental Health Director wrote, "I do not agree with the findings related to the use and availability of psychiatric service and prescribed medications as stated in the Grand Jury Report." He does, however, agree with our recommendation that there should be a nurse on duty 24 hours a day at the jail and explains that the County has been considering changing service delivery systems. The Sheriff, the Chief Probation Officer and the Health Officer have been asked for recommendations to help select a single medical services provider for all County incarceration and detention facilities. It would provide medical and nursing personnel to staff each facility 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, year round.

He concludes that "The jail and Juvenile Facilities were not designed to be used as psychiatric treatment centers, therefore the Crisis Mental Health team and assigned staff are best suited to assess the needs and seek outside treatment for those who are a danger to themselves or others."

We concur heartily and hope that all the County agencies involved can work together in harmony to provide individuals incarcerated with the health care they need.

FINDINGS:

In order to clarify our understanding of the current situation regarding the mental and physical health care of inmates, the Committee requested that the Sheriff come to the Grand Jury Chambers. He brought an Assistant Sheriff with him to answer any questions about the day-to-day running of the jail.

We asked the Sheriff to comment on the Health Officer/Director's contention that he, the Sheriff, had claimed to be quoted erroneously saying that the Health Officer did not allow on-duty nurses to evaluate mentally ill patients. The Sheriff replied, "The staff has told me that this was the situation in the past. However, the solution is not to argue, but to contract with a company that will provide psychological and medical services 24 hours a day." He added that the jail still has not been receiving all the services it needs, but relations with medical and psychological health care providers have worked better since the release of the Grand Jury report on January 18, 2001, especially in dealing with prisoners who came in with medications.

The Sheriff says the County is making headway towards 24-hour coverage. There is a better cooperative spirit. "We have improved our ability to take care of inmates."

RECOMMENDATIONS: Continue to seek a contract with a medical service provider that will include both physical and mental health care for county inmates.

COMMENTS:

Our thanks go once again to the Sheriff and the Assistant Sheriff for their cooperation. Our meeting was both informative and helpful.



COUNTY OF KINGS

SHELDON R. MINKIN, D.O.
Health Department Director
County Health Officer

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

330 CAMPUS DRIVE — HANFORD, CALIFORNIA 93230
TELEPHONE: AREA CODE 559. 584-1401

TO: Honorable Judge John O'Rourke

FROM: Sheldon R. Minkin, D.O. *S.R. Minkin*
Health Officer/Director

DATE: January 24, 2001

RE: Kings County Grand Jury Report – Law and Public Safety Committee

This memo is to correct information on pages 119 and 120.

The last paragraph on page 119 states:

"Newly arriving inmates who are mentally ill are not allowed to have any medication until they have been evaluated, even medication prescribed by their own doctor. According to the Sheriff, the Kings County Health Director refuses to allow county nurses on duty in the jail to evaluate mentally ill patients. Currently the psychiatrist under contract to the jail resides out of town and visits the jail only once a week. Severely affected individuals must be kept in safety cells and restrained for their own protection until they can see the psychiatrist and get their medication. The Committee feels this situation is unfair and unnecessary, not only to the mentally ill persons in custody, but also to the staff who must deal with them. If the on duty nurse had the authority to refer mentally ill patients, psychiatric evaluation and treatment could be made on an on-going basis. Contracting with local psychiatric personnel would allow me timely care and treatment."

This information is incorrect. Moreover, the Sheriff states that the comment attributed to him was not made by him. Specifically that the Kings County Health Director refuses to allow the county nurse to evaluate mentally ill patients.

Attached to this memo is jail medical policy and procedure 150A-4 which describes the process whereby newly arriving inmates are given prescribed psych medications. Those mentally ill inmates without a current mental health file at Kings County Mental Health or those without a physician or who are not on medication are referred to a Mental Health Counselor for purposes of evaluation and triage to other mental health professionals.

Honorable Judge John O'Rourke
January 24, 2001
Page Two

Although the jail nurses are employees of and under the control of the Health Department, mental health workers are from another department with it's own policies and procedures. Larry Spikes is the Mental Health Director and questions concerning mental health coverage and availability of a psychiatrist should be discussed with him.

The recommendations on page 120 are noted. I agree that a nurse on duty at the jail 24 hours a day is required. County Administration is aware of this but to date has not identified a funding source to pay for round the clock nursing coverage.

The nurse has the authority to determine if an inmate requires immediate psychiatric assistance. However, a nurse is not on site 24/7 but custody staff can request that Kingsview send a mental health professional to do a psych evaluation or the inmate can be transferred to an emergency room for evaluation and follow up.

cc: Kings County Grand Jury
Kings County Board of Supervisors
Sheriff Ken Marvin
Larry Spikes
Jane Mettee, SPHN
file x 2

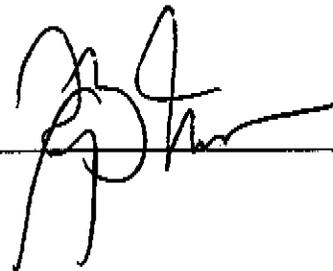
MENTAL HEALTH BOOKINGS CURRENTLY ON MEDICATIONS

1. Individuals booked into custody that come from State Hospitals, Group Homes, or other correctional facilities should be continued on their medications if they are booked with medications or bring current transfer orders. There will be a standing order from the psychiatrist to cover this. Only order enough medications until the individual is seen at the next psychiatric sick call. (should be less than 1 week).
2. If an individual is booked off the street and has a current Mental Health chart, they may be continued on their meds if the orders are signed and faxed to the correctional facility. Verbal orders may come from the psychiatrist but not any other mental health staff.
3. If an individual is booked under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol and has a current Mental Health chart, the corrections nurse will contact Mental Health who will consult with the psychiatrist. A decision will be made on a case by case basis to continue or hold the medications. The psychiatrist will contact the corrections nurse directly or fax any signed orders.
4. Use of benzodiazapines is not generally acceptable in the correctional facilities due to the high potential for abuse and inadequate facility for monitoring by the medical staff. If it is ordered (via open chart at Mental Health with current orders) and not given, the RN needs to have an order to hold the medication

Dr. Sheldon Minkin, D.O.



Dr. Romeo Mariano, Psychiatrist





OFFICE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

COUNTY OF KINGS
GOVERNMENT CENTER

LARRY SPIKES
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER

March 28, 2001

The Honorable Louis Bissig
1400 W. Lacey Blvd.
Hanford, CA 93230

As stated in the California Penal Code, Section 933 (c), this written response has been developed to provide additional information to the report received on January 19, 2001 from the 2000-2001 Grand Jury Law and Public Safety Committee. The Grand Jury report was written to summarize an informational tour conducted by committee members on August 17, 2000.

The section of this report, titled "Findings", referenced several areas pertaining to jail medical services. The Health Officer, Dr. Sheldon Minkin, has also responded to the cited findings in detail in a memorandum written to the Honorable Judge John O'Rourke dated January 24, 2001 that is also attached to this response. From Dr. Minkin's memo, I reiterate only that the current system for inmate medical services does provide for 24 hours per day medical need response through the use of health department nursing personnel, the Health Officer or his designee, and hospital personnel. The use of the local hospital emergency room medical personnel through Sheriff Detention Deputy transports of inmates in need of medical attention is utilized for after-hours and weekend medical service requests.

The medical services recommendation of the Grand Jury pertaining to having a nurse on duty 24 hours per day has not yet been implemented, however, there are plans to review and consider a changed service delivery system in FY 2001-2002. A Request For Proposal (RFP) has been discussed with the Sheriff, the Chief Probation Officer and the Health Officer to locate a 24-hour/day medical services provider for all County incarceration/detention facilities. The services requested will include medical and nursing personnel to staff each facility throughout 24-hour/7 days per week/365 days per year schedule. The RFP may be taken to the Board of Supervisors as early as May, 2001.

I do not agree with the findings related to the use and availability of psychiatric services and prescribed medications as stated in the Grand Jury report. Prescribed medications are listed on the intake sheet set up for each inmate and routed, the same day, to the nursing personnel on site each weekday. Prescribed medications can be provided to the inmate through the use of medication cards set up by the nursing personnel as soon as the medication order has been confirmed by the Health Officer or his designee. The psychiatrist's evaluation of the inmate is not required to continue the prescribed psychiatric medications, however, the Mental Health staff are notified of the inmate's medication needs and are added to the weekly schedule to be evaluated and treated by the psychiatrist. A nurse from the Mental Health staff travels to each facility and confirms the medication orders each week and schedules the inmates to be seen by the psychiatrist.

each Wednesday evening. During weekday hours, telephone consult to a psychiatrist through the Kings View Mental Health Counseling Services, located on Bailey Drive in Hanford, is another option to access authorization for prescribed medication. Finally, Mental Health counseling/therapy staff are available each weekday for inmates and wards in each facility. Mental Health staff accept direct referrals from inmates or wards, or from the Sheriff or Probation personnel without requiring access through the Health Department's nursing or medical personnel. The written referrals are placed in a designated location in the Sheriff's booking area and/or in the Juvenile Hall and are checked each weekday by Mental Health personnel. In addition, there are crisis service Mental Health clinicians/therapists available on a 24-hour call basis. Mental Health personnel receive the referral phone call, assess the immediate need, and will travel to either of the jail facilities or the juvenile hall or the local hospital to provide on-site assessment for "5150" situations (endangering self or others per Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150). All Mental Health personnel are contract employees with the County employed by Kings View Counseling Services.

Inmates and wards are placed in safety cells with restraints or in isolation cells for suicide watch as required for safety reasons and are treated according to Title 15 requirements. Related policies and procedures established for each facility designate that the Mental Health staff are to be notified through either the Crisis Services, for after-clinic hours and weekend contacts, or through the staff assigned to the facilities. The psychiatrist will examine these individuals during the weekly appointments, however, persons in these circumstances can be more rapidly evaluated by Mental Health staff for treatment elsewhere. The jail and juvenile center facilities were not designed to be used as psychiatric treatment centers, therefore, the Crisis Mental Health team and assigned staff are best suited to assess the needs and seek outside treatment for those persons who are a danger to themselves or others. There are five facilities in the State of California under contract with Kings County to serve as the "5150" designated centers to treat these individuals.

The findings and the recommendation related to the replacement of the jail facility are duly noted. The County will continue to pursue such funds through all available means. The Board placed Measures A and B before the voters on March 6, 2001. While Measure A passed, Measure B was defeated, thereby denying a temporary ½ cent sales tax increase that would have been used to finance the construction of a new jail, consistent with the will of the voters as expressed by the overwhelming passage of Measure A. Other attempts to secure funding through State agencies and even State General Fund surplus sources in the past two fiscal years have not succeeded in providing the additional revenue needed to complete a new jail facility.

Sincerely,

Larry Spikes
County Administrative Officer

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Animal Control
11827 11th Ave.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 584-9214

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Law and Public Safety

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
August 3, 2000
Interview August 23, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of Kings County Animal Control Department is to enforce ordinances requiring the licensing of dogs, quarantine animals that have bitten someone, pick up and dispose of road kill and euthanize stray and unwanted animals throughout Kings County. An additional duty is to prevent dogs from harassing livestock. The Department also responds to animal complaint calls and picks up strays in unincorporated Kings County. It also provides Animal Control services to the City of Hanford on a cost-sharing basis. Lemoore and Avenal have their own animal control officers and vehicles, but bring animals they have picked up to the Animal Control facility. The Department also provides service to Corcoran under a special contract. This consists of a full-time animal control officer and an animal control vehicle provided by the city of Corcoran.

The Animal Control facility consists of an office, an incinerator, kennels and corrals. Eight metal boxes for after-hours drop-off of unwanted animals are situated at the front of the building. The office building itself contains a reception area, an employees-only break room, a supply room and a small room where animals are euthanized. The incinerator is located outside just beyond the euthanasia room. The kennels are at the south end of the building. Beyond the kennels are corrals for two to three large animals, such as horses or cows.

Personnel includes one supervisor, one receptionist, three animal control officers and two County Jail inmates assigned to feed animals and clean kennels.

Owners surrendering their pets to Animal Control pay a \$5.00 fee for cats and small dogs and \$8.00 for larger dogs. If the animal must be picked up by Animal Control, the fee is \$10.00. There is no charge for animals left in the drop-off boxes or strays, whether they are brought to the facility or picked up by Animal Control. Seized or surrendered dogs and cats are held in the kennels for four days, as specified by law. Those that are not claimed are euthanized. The kennels are arranged as follows: Ward A, 10 cages for quarantined animals; Ward B, 23 cages for cats; Wards C and D, 8 cages each for large dogs; Puppy Ward, 8 cages.

The Department has two animal control trucks outfitted with cages for transporting captured and dead animals and a single trailer for transporting livestock.

FINDINGS:

To follow up on the 1999-2000 Grand Jury recommendations and to familiarize ourselves with Animal Control operations, the Committee made a surprise visit to the Animal Control facility. The Supervisor gave us a tour of the premises. On the day we visited, 36 cats and 81 dogs were housed within the facility. We later learned the kennels were designed to hold 65 dogs and 28 cats. A new wing is scheduled to be built in 2001, which will alleviate this crowding and allow animals to be kept longer before being euthanized.

Under the pressure of this overcrowding it must be difficult to segregate sick from healthy animals. In fact, we did observe one obviously sick dog caged with apparently healthy ones. In spite of the overcrowding, the Committee was impressed by the cleanliness of the entire facility.

The supervisor showed us the area where animals are euthanized and the incinerator where their bodies are cremated. We were impressed with the caution the staff exercised in dealing with the euthanasia drugs, which are kept under lock and key with limited access. According to the Animal Control Supervisor, the procedure is quick, clean and painless. A dog or cat is injected with a lethal dose of sleeping medication, which stops the heart.

Most of the euthanized animals are incinerated on the premises. However, the bodies of adult cats of a specified size are sold for \$2.50 each to a company that provides specimens for scientific, educational and veterinary use. This generates five to six thousand dollars a year.

The staff tries to find homes for as many animals as possible, but their responsibilities are animal population control and public safety. They maintain a list of people looking for particular breeds to adopt. The local newspaper publishes a free twice-weekly ad listing animals available for adoption. This advertisement runs when the Supervisor has the time to prepare the list.

The Supervisor told us the Department was currently operating short-handed. He said he intended to turn over the task of composing the list to one of three employees the department was planning to hire in the near future.

Most of the recommendations made by the 1999 - 2000 Grand Jury have been implemented. At the time of our interview, the Department was interviewing applicants for three positions. The kennels have been completely painted. A new Animal Control truck is in the 2000 - 2001 budget. Kings County Motor pool has a policy and replacement program for replacing aged vehicles. The information sheet has been updated.

However, the recommendation to seek funding for a survey to determine where stray and surrendered animals originate was not implemented. According to the Animal Control Supervisor, it would be virtually impossible to find out where the majority of the animals handled by Animal Control comes from because many animals are picked up running loose or placed in the drop boxes.

Later we met with the Supervisor and the Assistant Sheriff to obtain further information. In reviewing the guidebook given to Animal Control Officers, the Committee noted it is outdated and needs to be revised to be in line with current practices. For example, the stated goals of Animal Control included picking up and euthanizing stray and unwanted animals, but made no mention of placing them in new homes. When the matter was brought up in this meeting, the Assistant Sheriff agreed that the book should be revised.

We also discussed the drinking fountain located in the Animal Control office area. On our tour, several Committee members had noticed that it didn't work properly. The Supervisor told us that this particular drinking fountain had been repaired many times, to no avail. He felt that it should be replaced.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Expedite construction of the new wing and increase the number of kennels.
2. Increase staffing to the authorized level of five.
3. Revise and update the departmental manual of operating procedures to reflect current procedures. Include procedures of placing unwanted and stray animals.
4. Replace the faulty water fountain in the reception area.

COMMENTS:

It is unfortunate that animals, many of them former pets, are held for such a short waiting period before being euthanized, but the large numbers of abandoned, surrendered or seized animals make it a necessity.

SUMMARY

Law and Public Safety Committee

After the 2000-2001 Grand Jury was impaneled, the Law and Public Safety Committee was formed with nine members. The members realized they had a large obligation to the citizens of Kings County and worked diligently to bring the facts out in proper form. In its duty as the public's "Watch Dog," the Committee visited many of the County's fire stations and law enforcement agencies.

The Committee visited the Sheriff's Department, Probation Department, Boot Camp, Female Treatment Center and Juvenile Center. We also toured Corcoran Police Department and all State Prisons located in Kings County. All facilities seem to be running well, and Kings County can be proud of its law enforcement agencies.

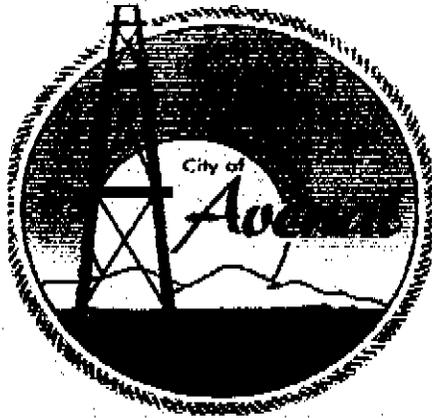
The Committee toured the Sheriff's Department and visited the Branch Jail. The most critical need we learned of was the lack of space for holding prisoners. Kings County is in dire need of a new jail facility. Due to limited space in the present jail, with State and Federal laws dictating prisoners' rights, many prisoners are given early release because of space limitations.

Kings County voters were asked to approve a one - half percent sales tax increase for eight years to build a new jail facility. However, the voters turned down the proposal. It is unfortunate that the proposal put on the ballot was not explained clearly enough to the voting citizens.

We enjoyed our visits to the Armona, Corcoran and Kit Carson Fire Stations. Kings County should be proud of its firefighters, as they excel in all respects. The Committee also toured the Kings County Animal Control Shelter and was impressed by the way it is maintained and kept clean.

As Chairperson I thank every member of the Committee for their dedication and many hours of hard work.

Robert Schaub, Chairperson
Edith Howland, Assistant Chairperson
Janet Bloyd
Rhonda Hakker
Quinton Ross
Joyce Heintz
Leon Garrone
Dallas Schiewe
Leonard Silva



Oasis In The Sun



Local Government



AREA OF INQUIRY:

Building Permit Fees

Lemoore Building Department
119 Fox St.
Lemoore, CA 93245
(559) 924-6700

Corcoran Building Department
549 Yoder Blvd.
Corcoran, CA 93212
(559) 992-2151

Avenal Building Department
919 Skyline Blvd.
Avenal, CA 93204
(559) 386-5766

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Local Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Interviews
January 9, 2001
January 30, 2001
February 27, 2001
April 10, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Whenever a new building is constructed, or an existing building is remodeled, expanded or improved, the builder must obtain building permits from local authorities. Inspections are conducted at each phase of the building process to ensure that the building is in compliance with state and local regulations. Building permit fees are calculated from the valuation of the new or improved structure provided by a fee schedule set up for each region of California by State Code. This fee schedule is expressed in dollars per square foot. Permit fees are limited by California State Law to an amount not to exceed "the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged."

There are four standards of evaluation used by local Building Officials:

1. For Building Valuations, the Valuation Table of the Building Standards
2. For Building Code Fees, the Valuation Building Code Tables
3. For Plumbing Code Fees, the Uniform Building Code
4. For Electrical Fees, the National Electrical Code.

These state and national standards are periodically updated. For example, California State Building Code valuation tables are issued on a three-year cycle. The 2000 Code is to be released for use in August 2001.

In order to assure the validity of the fee schedule and protect the rights of the public to fair fees, the 1997-1998, 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 Grand Juries undertook a review of building permit fees charged by local governments within Kings County. The 2000-2001 Grand Jury has continued this review, recently concluding an examination of the fees charged by the City of Hanford for building permits. The Committee felt it would be appropriate to expand that review to the other cities in Kings County.

FINDINGS:

In our review of building permit fees charged in Kings County, the Committee interviewed building officials from three cities: Lemoore, Corcoran and Avenal .

Lemoore:

The Committee interviewed the Assistant City Manager, and the Director of Public Works relative to building permit fees in the Grand Jury chambers January 30, 2001. We were informed that the city uses the 1992 State Government Code to determine the amount of building permit fees, as they have found that this covers the actual cost of Building Inspectors, their reports and office costs, resulting in a break even account. This was determined by a fee study that involved keeping a record of the time and expense involved in performing various types of building inspections. These officials told us that the income from building permit fees varies from year to year, sometimes resulting in a deficit that is covered by the City's General Fund. This is made up in subsequent years.

An Impact Fee is billed at the same time as the Building Permit Fees charged for new construction. However, the Impact Fee is designed to cover the cost of new infrastructure occasioned by new buildings. This fee pays for the cost of new or expanded streets, sewers, law enforcement, fire department, schools, traffic lights and other improvements necessitated by the construction of new dwellings and commercial structures. The amount charged for the Impact Fee is dictated by State Bill 1600.

The Building Inspectors also serve as Fire Inspectors inasmuch as the volunteer fire department does not have the capacity to provide and train personnel for such inspections.

New housing starts in Lemoore have averaged less than 200 a year for the past 5 years. Current staffing is two Building Inspectors and a secretary shared with the Fire Department. (The secretary works for the Building Officials 75 percent of the time, and for the Fire Department 25 percent of the time.) The Lemoore area is experiencing a small business building boom with new construction that includes an additional Leprino plant, a movie theater, a Motel 6, a new powdered tomato processing plant and a West Hills College campus. Lemoore Building Department officials foresee the need for an additional building inspector in the near future.

The officials we spoke with were very proud of Lemoore's automated building permits. Recently a system was established whereby building permit forms can be downloaded from the internet, filled out in the privacy of one's home, then returned to the Building Department with the appropriate fees. Some day the entire process may be carried out online.

Finally, the Lemoore Planning and Building Inspection Departments will move from several different locations at and near City Hall to more centralized offices in the space formerly occupied by the Police Department in the Fire Station.

Corcoran:

The City of Corcoran's Building Department consists of one full-time Building Official and one part-time Code Enforcement Officer. Corcoran issues approximately 350 to 400 building permits each year, including between 20 and 25 permits for new construction. The remainder of the building permits are issued for remodeling projects and anything else requiring building permits. The Corcoran Building Department collected \$86,000 from building permit fees in the year 2000.

The Committee invited Corcoran's Building Official to meet with us to discuss that city's current building permit fee schedules. We met January 9, 2001. The Building Official has been with the City of Corcoran since 1990 in a one-person office handling the issuing of building permits, inspections, code enforcement and weed abatement. The Building Official accompanies the part-time Code Enforcement Officer on visitations to enforce the Building Code.

The Building Official presented a Base Fee Master Listing derived from the 1994 Government Codes. He stated that a new code book is issued every three years. The 1997 fee changes had not yet been adopted at the time of our interview, so the 1994 Code was being followed

Mindful of the fact that California law limits building permit fees to an amount not to exceed "the estimated reasonable cost" of performing the services listed, the Committee feels that Corcoran should undertake a fee study. This would provide either justification for current fees or a basis for adjusted fees.

Avenal:

The Committee spoke with Avenal's Public Works Director February 27, 2001. Avenal is a small city, and he wears many hats, including being in charge of animal control, maintenance, parks, mechanics, code enforcement, landfill and building inspection and permits. In 2000, nine new homes were built in Avenal. Approximately 115 building permits were issued in the same time frame.

We learned that Avenal follows the 1998 State Building Code schedule of fees. However, the Public Works Director left us confused as to what records are kept and how building

permit fee amounts were decided upon for Avenal. It seemed to us that Avenal was not keeping a detailed record of the cost of doing various inspections, nor was it using those costs to determine the fees charged.

Accordingly, we asked the Mayor and City Manager to visit the Grand Jury chambers to give us more information. On April 10, 2001, the Mayor and City Manager brought us information about many praiseworthy public programs Avenal is engaged in, but seemed as unaware as the Public Works Director of the need to justify the fees being charged for building permits. It is our recommendation that the city undertake a fee study to ensure that their building permit fees do not exceed the actual cost of performing the service. We also recommend that the city restructure its bookkeeping system so that the cost of running each department is clear.

We feel that any errors or omissions committed by Avenal in deriving building permit fees were purely the result of misunderstanding code directives. Following this conversation with the Mayor and City Manager, we are confident that Avenal will take the steps needed to correct the situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lemoore: None

Corcoran: Conduct a fee study on building permit fees.

Avenal:

1. Conduct a fee study on building permit fees.
2. Revise current record-keeping policy to be complete and accurate.

In order to assure the validity of the fee schedule and protect the rights of the public to fair fees, the 2001-2002 Grand Jury should continue this review by examining the building permit fees charged by County Building Officials.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury found the matter of building permit fees confusing and unclear, not only to laypersons, but also to many of the local officials who are supposed to compile fee schedules in line with State Government Building Code for their own community. By State law, building permit fees must be no more than the "estimated reasonable cost of providing the service." While the State provides a schedule of suggested fees, local government is obligated to charge only what the actual cost for each service is. It should be prepared to substantiate these fees. We strongly urge cities and communities in Kings County to conduct periodic fee studies to learn the true cost of inspecting buildings and other structures.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Hanford Cemetery District
10500 S. 10th Ave.
Calvary Cemetery
1750 S 10th Ave.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 584-3937

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

City Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour and Interviews
August 22, 2000
September 26, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

A five member Board of Trustees, expanded in 1999 from three members, at the recommendation of the 1998 -1999 Grand Jury. governs the Hanford Cemetery District. The Board was formed January 23, 1948. The Hanford Cemetery District consists of four cemeteries: Kingsriver, five acres located on Dover Avenue; Lakeside, two acres located on Kent Avenue; Calvary, thirty-four acres located on south 10th Avenue; and Hanford, thirty-seven acres located on 10th Avenue. Hanford Cemetery District is the smallest of the three cemetery districts in Kings County, but serves the largest population; half of the county's population lives within the district's boundaries.

The American Legion leases the northeast corner of the Hanford Cemetery for the display of a U. S. Army tank, a Memorial Wall listing veterans' names and cremation vaults for veterans.

The district employs five full-time groundskeepers, one full-time secretary and one full-time superintendent. Part-time help is provided during the summer months and at vacation time. Funding is derived from property taxes, sales of lots, vaults, liners and services.

FINDINGS:

The Committee met with the District Manager of Hanford Cemetery District at Kings River Cemetery. It is believed to be the oldest cemetery in Kings County.

Kings River Cemetery was flooded many years ago when it was a private cemetery. A tractor plowing the property to remove the tall grass that had grown up, knocked nearly all the headstones down. Later, the community erected a large monument listing all the names and dates of those who were known to have been buried there.

Today the cemetery consists of approximately five acres of open land and about one acre of lawn and trees. Besides the monument, there are a few headstones, some of which are new. The broken stones that they replaced are standing along the west boundary of the cemetery.

According to the District Manager, the lawn area is still an active cemetery.. There are 48 graves, with six more plots remaining. The District Manager said the cemetery district does not allow burial in the larger area because it is not known where earlier graves are located.

The Committee found this cemetery to be immaculately kept.

We also visited Lakeside Cemetery, an attractive, park-like cemetery. There are approximately 50 graves there. At one time the cemetery was next to a country church, which maintained it. The County took over the management of the cemetery in 1948. Records are very poor prior to that time.

According to the District Manager, the district has been making some improvements at Lakeside Cemetery. New water valves and a water pump have recently been installed.

The District Manager took us to Hanford Cemetery. Old Hanford Cemetery is on the west side of 10th Avenue and New Hanford Cemetery is on the east side of 10th Avenue.

The Committee was impressed with the attractiveness and cleanliness of Hanford Cemetery. The problems with litter and weeds that the 1999 -2000 Grand Jury commented upon have been taken care of. We feel that this is the direct result of the efforts of the new District Manager. The management plan that he explained to the 1999 - 2000 Grand Jury seems to be a great success.

Potters Field and the Chinese Cemetery, in startling contrast to the manicured, green cemeteries we had visited, were simply burned-over open fields. These two cemeteries consist of approximately 3.5 acres located side by side on 10th Avenue south of Hanford Cemetery. They are not owned by the Hanford Cemetery District. At the time of our visit, the Kings County Board of Supervisors had recently decided to take possession of them so that they could be restored. According to California Law 8131 governing cemeteries, control of a cemetery which has been abandoned for five years reverts to the Board of Supervisors of the county in which it is located.

Potters Field is the traditional name for a cemetery for the indigent. Records reveal 379 people are buried in Hanford's Potters Field. Burials go back to the 1890s, when this area was part of Tulare County.

The Grand Jury met with a representative of the Old Cemeteries Committee to learn what plans are being made for the restoration of Potters Field. She told us that the Committee planned to re-establish the cemetery, then turn it over to the Hanford Cemetery District for maintenance.

The Cemetery Committee plans to plant grass and trees, and to set up a monument listing the names of those known to have been interred there. It intends to fund this \$5,000

project through donations. Labor is expected to be done by volunteers. The restoration project should take approximately six months.

The Chinese Cemetery was established prior to 1891, when a plaque installed in the Daoist Temple listed the names of those who had purchased the land for the Chinese community. According to the board member of the Daoist Temple Preservation Society, who visited us in the Grand Jury chambers to brief us on plans for the restoration of the Chinese Cemetery, Chinese people were not allowed to be buried in other cemeteries in the county until the late 1940s. The latest burial in this cemetery took place in 1955.

The Chinese community maintained this cemetery, but it has never had grass or been watered regularly because Chinese tradition was that family members swept the grave site of a deceased loved one. There was no water at this cemetery location.

There are only a few people still buried here; it was traditional after ten years to exhume the bones of the dead, clean them and ship them to their ancestral village in China so their families could tend their spirits. According to the board member, this was done as recently as ten to fifteen years ago, when ten bodies were exhumed and sent to relatives in Northern California.

The Committee was fascinated by the few remnants of Chinese culture and burial customs we found at the burned-over site of the Chinese Cemetery. Primary of these were the remains of a round, flat cement structure marking the site where offerings of incense and cooked meats were made. An inscription indicated that this meditation area had been remodeled in 1920. We also found two or three blocks of cement with Chinese writing on them that we took to be headstones. The board member told us that three or four headstones had been found in the Chinese Cemetery, but the usual way of marking Chinese graves in this cemetery had been wood markers.

When asked what the Chinese community wanted to do with the Chinese cemetery, the board member said that they wanted to restore it—especially the offering area—and to replace the headstones that are known to have been in the cemetery.

The Committee was infused with the sense of excitement conveyed by both of the women who came into our chambers to speak about this renovation project. We can hardly wait to see the finished product.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

Credit for the revitalization of Hanford's cemeteries is due to the members of the newly-expanded Cemetery Commission, as well as the new District Manager. The Committee is impressed with the respect for the dead expressed by everyone we came in contact with in our tour and interviews.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Lemoore Cemetery
1441 N. Lemoore Ave.
Lemoore, Ca. 93245
(559) 924-3439

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Local Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Inspection
March 27, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

The Lemoore Cemetery District was established in 1868 and became a public district in 1934. The District includes the Lemoore Cemetery located at 1441 N. Lemoore Ave., Lemoore, an expansion to the Lemoore Cemetery on 18th Avenue between Lacey Boulevard and Grangeville Boulevard, and the Grangeville Cemetery located in Armona on 14th Avenue South of Lacey Boulevard and North of Hanford Armona Road.

FINDINGS:

The Committee visited Lemoore Cemetery and Grangeville Cemetery for a brief inspection. We found the grounds of both cemeteries well kept and pleasantly landscaped. Lemoore Cemetery's recent expansion program seems to have insured that it will have available gravesites for the foreseeable future. Grangeville Cemetery has plenty of plots for future needs in its expansion area.

Residents of the Lemoore Cemetery District continue to be assured of an economical and well maintained final resting place.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS: None

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Citizen Complaint
Hanford Cemetery District
10500 S. 10th Avenue
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 584-3937

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Local Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Citizen Complaint
April 10, 2001
April 17, 2001
May 1, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

A column that appeared in a local newspaper March 25, 2001 provoked a citizen complaint to the Grand Jury. The column, titled "What is a graveside service?" told the story of a San Diego family that wanted to bury the cremated remains of their father in his mother's grave at Calvary Cemetery. The series of mistakes, miscommunication and mistrust that resulted from this simple wish turned what should have been a solemn occasion for mourning and family bonding into a catastrophe.

The complaint received by the Grand Jury asked us to look into this problem, especially since the column quoted the District Manager as saying "This kind of mess happens about 60 percent of the time..." and the Hanford Cemetery District had refused to refund the \$250 additional fee the family paid for a Saturday service or to issue a written apology to the deceased's widow.

Customarily the mortician handles these matters, so such problems seldom arise except when, as in this case, family members must make the arrangements themselves.

FINDINGS:

The Committee decided to interview a member of the Hanford Cemetery District Board of Trustees to get the Trustees' point of view. She briefly reviewed the situation and told us that the Board of Trustees was firmly opposed to refunding any money. Reportedly, they felt that the daughter who had been making the arrangements was disrespectful to the District Manager. Also, the Board of Trustees felt that the family had received their service since they were able to have graveside ceremonies on Saturday and the ashes were eventually interred.

Two important elements in any burial, placing the remains in the grave and closing the grave were not performed by the Cemetery District on Saturday. The Committee suggested that since the burial was not completed on Saturday, one could infer that the family in question had received only half a Saturday burial service. Therefore, the

Committee felt the Cemetery District should refund half the \$250 fee charged for services on Saturday. The Trustee agreed to relay our suggestion to the Board of Trustees.

Shortly thereafter the Committee learned that the Board of Trustees would like to pay us a visit. It seemed they were unhappy with our handling of the complaint about the botched burial.

Accordingly, the Vice-Chairman and the District Manager arrived in the Grand Jury chambers at the appointed time. (The Chairman of the Board arrived later.) The air of hostility was unmistakable and only increased when the Chairman came in.

The Vice-Chairman told us we were "out of line" for meeting with one of the Trustees, rather than the Chairman. The Chairman added that we, as Grand Jury members, should know that there ought to be two persons representing the Board at any meeting. This was news to us. If the Board really had this rule as policy, the Trustee should have informed us when we made the appointment with her. In fact, the Grand Jury is empowered to speak with anyone we wish, independent of "policy."

It seems the Hanford Cemetery District Board of Trustees had forgotten that the District is a public agency, an agency the Grand Jury is required to review. We suppose that in saying that we ought to know that two persons must represent the Board, the Chairman referred to the legal requirement that Grand Jurors investigate or perform other Grand Jury duties in pairs, but this characterizes our investigations and serves to substantiate our findings. It has nothing to do with the policies of public agencies such as the Cemetery District Board of Trustees.

After discussing this at length, the Grand Jury and the Trustees were able to agree that it would be helpful to review the events leading up to the complaint letter being filed in order to develop some procedures that would help the District avoid similar problems arising in the future.

The District Manager related what had happened from his point of view. He said that the daughter of the deceased had handled the arrangements for the burial because she lived in Kings County, while the rest of the family lived elsewhere. She made the initial contact with the Cemetery District via telephone. The District Secretary informed her of the requirements and costs of burial in Kings County, including the \$250 fee, which was imposed because the District had to pay its cemetery workers overtime for working on a Saturday. The District Manager said that the Secretary had at this point informed the daughter of the requirement for a burial permit.

Subsequently, the daughter's husband came to the District Office to pay for the burial. He received a sales contract that included a list of fees, but no list of required documents. A few days later the daughter came by the Cemetery District office to fill in some missing dates on the contract. She and the Secretary reviewed the paperwork that she had gathered, except for the burial permit. The daughter said the permit was with the cremated remains and would be brought from San Diego by the widow of the deceased

shortly before the graveside service. It seemed that all the necessary documents were in hand.

But when the widow and the daughter of the deceased brought the remains to the cemetery the day of the burial, the paperwork that came with them did not include a burial permit. At this point the Cemetery District was governed by California law. Without a burial permit, the District could not bury the ashes.

The District Manager apologized for the situation, saying that this sort of thing frequently happened, especially with out-of-town people. He suggested that the family have the burial service anyway and tell none of the family that the ashes of the deceased would not actually be buried on that day. The family could get a burial permit on Monday, the ashes would be buried on Monday, and no one need be the wiser. In the meantime, he would take possession of the remains and store them in the District safe. This seemed satisfactory to the family, and the revised service went as planned.

The following Monday, however, did not go as smoothly. The daughter and her husband arrived with the required burial permit and the District Manager got the cremated remains out of the safe. He told us it wasn't usually allowed, but he let the pair come with him to watch as the remains were put in the grave and the grave was closed. Upon arrival at the grave site, they found that the grave had been left open and uncovered during the intervening days since the ceremony, and it had standing water in it. This had to be pumped out with a hand pump. The daughter, already more upset than she had seemed on the previous Saturday, grew increasingly agitated. As her father's remains were finally interred in the grave, she insisted on looking closely at the crematory urn to make certain that his name—not another person's—was engraved upon it.

In turn, the District Manager became offended. According to him, the woman and her husband were by now very upset and threatening. The \$250 Saturday burial fee suddenly became an issue. The District Manager said he had been considering refunding the fee and paying for it from his own pocket, but this shift in attitude changed his mind. They parted with no resolution to the problem and angry feelings on all sides.

Shortly thereafter the District Manager received a telephone call from a newspaper columnist. It was a conference call that included the son-in-law of the deceased, the columnist and the District Manager. According to the District Manager, the columnist was very threatening, saying that he had written two columns about the service this family had received from the Cemetery District, one positive and one negative. Unless the Cemetery District refunded the Saturday burial fee and wrote a letter of apology to the wife of the deceased, the negative column would appear in a local newspaper. The District Manager said that it was the daughter's word against the Secretary's. He discontinued the conversation because of its threatening tone.

Within a few days the negative column appeared in the newspaper. A complaint to the Grand Jury followed. Next the Committee spoke with the Cemetery Board Trustee. We

presume that the Board of Trustees decided not to refund any money or issue an apology at its next regularly scheduled meeting, which happened to be shortly thereafter.

The Committee discussed this chain of events with the District Manager and the two Trustees. We asked four important questions.

1. Was there a printed list of the documents necessary for a burial, which might be mailed or given to persons arranging for a burial, to be signed by both the family member and the representative of the Cemetery District who handled the arrangements? The answer was no.
2. Was the estimate that 60 percent of the funerals had incomplete paperwork attributed to the District Manager an accurate quote? The District Manger denied having said it.
3. When the Committee asked why neither the District Manager nor the Board of Trustees had written a letter to the columnist or to the editor of the newspaper complaining about the misquote, the Chairman of the Board said that it was Board policy not to respond to anything like this appearing in the newspaper. It would only stir up a battle of letters to the editor.
4. Can a burial be conducted if the burial permit comes from another county? The District Manager assured us that the burial permit can be from "anywhere."

In the interest of fairness, the Committee asked the daughter of the deceased to come to the Grand Jury chambers to tell her side of the story. She brought her husband with her. Their account of events tallied with that of the District Manager except in its interpretation of emotional factors and a few important details. First, she categorically denied that she had ever been told that she needed a burial permit. In fact, she said, she had been told that all the paperwork was in order when she visited the Cemetery District office before the day of the funeral service. Furthermore, she said that the Monday after the services, the Secretary said that the District Manager had been in error when he told her that he could not bury her father's ashes on the scheduled day. He was new at the job, she intimated, and not familiar with all the different forms. She riffled through the papers the daughter had brought with her and picked out the burial permit which had been obtained that very day at the Kings County Health Department. "This is what you needed," she said.

The daughter told the Committee that her family had found out about the delayed burial almost immediately, and grieving family members became very upset. Some, in fact, voiced mistrust of the Cemetery District, warning her that the wrong ashes might be interred. Because of all the turmoil and the fact that the \$250 fee had been a financial burden on the widow, it seemed to her only fair for the Cemetery District to issue a refund accompanied by a letter of apology. She also said that the District Manager had definitely told her that 60 percent of funerals had similar problems, and she had relayed that statistic to the columnist.

A relative who lived in Kings County and had been an elected official there offered to mediate. This person contacted the Chairman, and a meeting was arranged to take place

at the Cemetery District office. The Chairman failed to keep the appointment, however, and he telephoned later to say that he had been held up and they would have to reschedule the appointment. This meeting, when it took place a week later, concluded with no resolution to the problem.

It is curious to the Committee that the Chairman of the Cemetery District Board of Trustees should violate his own policy of attending any and all meetings pertaining to District business accompanied by another board member. In fact, it calls into doubt whether such a policy ever existed.

What, then is the Committee to make of the dispute over the belated burial of some unfortunate man's cremated remains? Many questions have been raised that will probably never be answered. We do, however, have some opinions about what probably happened and how things might have been handled better.

First, we feel that all sides were confused about what documents were needed for burial in Kings County and what documents were already in the daughter's possession. It is immaterial whether the Secretary told the daughter what papers she needed. Clearly, there was confusion about the names of the documents, so that a certificate identifying the cremated remains was mistaken for a burial permit. Furthermore, the District Manager himself seems to be confused about the proper procedure of obtaining a burial permit. He told us that a burial permit could be issued by any county. In fact, a quick call to the County Health Department produced the information that all remains for burial in Kings County must be accompanied by a burial permit issued by Kings County.

Regarding the newspaper column that misquoted the District Manager, we feel that it was probably a mistake for the family of the deceased to go to the newspaper columnist because it only inflamed matters further. Additionally, the columnist engaged in irresponsible journalism when he published a second-hand quotation. This error is all the more egregious considering that he spoke with the District Manager on the telephone but never bothered to confirm the quotation. Also, we must question the ethics of threatening to publish a derogatory column if one's demands are not met. As for the Board of Trustees, it might do well to set up a policy regarding responding to the press. It is important to correct published errors and misquotations as soon as possible, as they become accepted as fact in a short time.

This Committee has interviewed the District Manager before and formed a uniformly high opinion of him. We feel he is doing an excellent job maintaining Hanford's cemeteries. However, we must conclude that he is ultimately responsible for the mistakes that were made by the Cemetery District. It is clear to us that at some point he took the dispute over the burial personally. Furthermore, we have to ask how closely he has been supervising the Secretary. A review of procedures and job functions is definitely in order. If the cemetery contract included a check-off list of all documents needed (including their exact names and form numbers) and a place for both the family member and the Cemetery District representative to sign and date it, this whole sorry affair might have been averted.

Last but not least we take up the behavior and attitude of the Board of Trustees—or at least of those who came to visit us on April 17, 2001. We feel their behavior was inappropriate—stubborn, verbally abusive and rude. Their lack of professionalism reflects badly on the Hanford Cemetery District and those who selected them. Furthermore, it raises the question, “If they treated us this badly, how do they treat the general public?”

We feel the Board of Trustees should spend some time reflecting on the responsibilities of public servants. Hopefully, this will result in an improvement in their demeanor and a more professional way of providing service to the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Hanford Cemetery District Board of Trustees should:

1. Develop a more professional attitude towards dealing with the public and other Government bodies
2. Refund at least some of the \$250 Saturday fee and issue a written apology to the deceased's widow
3. Set up a policy for responding to articles in the press, especially when an employee or Trustee is misquoted
4. Put together a package of materials to be given or mailed to people who are planning an interment in a Hanford Cemetery District cemetery. It should include a checklist of the necessary documents, appropriate forms to fill out and a contract for services to be rendered. A copy of this checklist, signed by the client and the District representative who handles the arrangements, should accompany the completed contract when it is returned to the Cemetery District.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury was surprised and offended by the behavior of the Cemetery District Trustees when they first came into the Grand Jury chambers. We could sense the hostility in the air before a word was spoken.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Corcoran Recreation and Parks
750 North Ave.
Corcoran, CA 93212
(559) 992-2151

Father Wyatt Park
Brokaw Ave. and Flory Ave.

Cesar Chavez Park
Oregon Ave. and Yosemite Ave.

Christmas Tree Park
Whitley Ave. and Chittenden Ave.

John Maroot Park
1000 Van Dorsten Ave.

Burnham Smith Park
900 Dairy Ave.

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Local Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
August 22, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The City of Corcoran Department of Public Works maintains five city parks. The upkeep of these parks and all the city buildings is the responsibility of 2.5 maintenance persons. The Department of Public Works is also responsible for the maintenance of the town's ponding basins, small park-like areas for storage of water run-off in wet years.

Father Wyatt Park consists of approximately one acre. Located in an industrial area with a few single-family homes, it is named for Father Stephen Wyatt, founder and pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church between 1939 and 1945. With the help of parishioners and local businesses Father Wyatt provided playground equipment at this site for the children of Eastside Corcoran so they would not have to cross the railroad tracks to engage in wholesome activities.

There are five picnic tables and two barbeque grills, a baseball diamond and backstop for informal games, as well as a drinking fountain.

Cesar Chavez Park is the town's oldest park and it consists of .8 acres. The park has benches, several children's play areas and a drinking fountain. It is co-located with Mark Twain Elementary School, and Corcoran Joint Unified School District has the responsibility for maintaining the park grounds. There is a soccer field north of the park,

which belongs to the school. On weekends it is used for league soccer play. The school has put up portable restrooms for the use of those visiting the park or participating in soccer. There is off-street parking adjacent to the park.

Christmas Tree Park is the city's newest park. Located on the reclaimed site of a service station in the center of town, the property was donated by the Hansen and Gilkey families. Other prominent citizens and businesses contributed park fixtures.

John Maroot Park is a large park, consisting of 2.4 acres. It is located across the street from Corcoran District Hospital. It has picnic tables, barbeque grills, benches, a drinking fountain, a playground for children ages six and up and a public restroom. For many years a center of community activities, it has a public address system and security lights. The Corcoran Cotton Festival is traditionally held in John Maroot Park the first week of October. Situated on park grounds is the recently renovated Veteran's Memorial Building, which the City of Corcoran purchased from Kings County for one dollar in 1999. There is off-street parking.

Burnham Smith Park is an L-shaped park consisting of 1 acre, co-located with the Kate H. Boswell Senior Center, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Corcoran City Pool. It offers picnic tables, barbeque grills, horseshoe pits, a volleyball area and a playground for children ages six and up. The public restrooms are open 24 hours a day. There is a large baseball area adjacent to it. Off-street parking is available. The YMCA is responsible for maintaining the grounds.

FINDINGS:

The Committee toured Corcoran's city parks on a Corcoran Area Transit bus provided by the city. The Public Works Director served as our guide. Later in the tour one of the maintenance personnel took over this role. According to the Director, the public does not need to make a reservation to use the picnic tables at any Corcoran public park. Alcohol is not allowed.

Father Wyatt Park

The first park we visited was Father Wyatt Park. The Director indicated that improvements were being planned for this park. Among them are erecting a sign identifying the park and the construction of public restrooms.

Father Wyatt Park is in need of renovation, in our opinion. While the park is neatly kept, there are two major problems that need to be taken care of. First, there is an area in the center of the park where water pools and drowns the grass. We were told that this is the result of joyriders driving their cars into the center of the park, breaking off sprinkler heads. This packs the ground and creates a depression where water pools.

The Director said the Department planned to replant the grass. We feel that the root cause of this problem is the fact that the park is unfenced. A simple barrier would discourage

joyriding through the park. Other communities have installed a series of posts to deny vehicles entrance to park grounds. Another possible solution is to build up the cement curb or install a low wooden barrier along Flory Avenue.

Second, the sand around the swing set doesn't look clean, and we feel it is unsanitary. We saw numerous small bees hovering over the sand, which we took to be an indication that there is food or organic waste buried near the surface. We feel that it should be replaced with clean sand or some other suitable medium.

The Committee also noticed a couple of items that required repair or replacement. The safety clip on the infant swing was broken. The wooden portion of the picnic table nearest the play area was weathered beyond reclamation. We saw numerous long, rough splinters in the grain of the wood and wondered how anyone could have a picnic at that table without injury.

Cesar Chavez Park

Next we visited Cesar Chavez Park, also known as Mark Twain Park because it is located next to Mark Twain Elementary School. Seven trees were planted here January 28, 1986, in honor of the astronauts who died in the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle.

The Director told us that only two years ago Cesar Chavez Park was reclaimed from drug dealers, drug users and other unsavory characters who discouraged family activities at the park. Some of the difficulties in maintaining public parks can be seen in this, as well as in the fact that the sign identifying the park was recently pulled down by unknown vandals who evidently possessed a pickup truck and a set of heavy chains. The new sign was set in concrete inside a chain link fence.

Central to the play area is a large, multi-level wooden structure featuring a plank bridge held together by chain. The Director pointed out platforms where children could easily fall or jump off. The plank bridge, although appealing to the imagination, has several hazardous features, such as heavy chain link that could pinch small fingers or hands and unstable footing that could cause falls. We noticed that some of the chain links were detached from the planks, creating an additional hazard. The Director told us that this structure would probably have to be replaced, since the manufacturer does not offer retrofit parts to bring it up to safety standards and if the city modified the play structure, it would nullify the manufacturer's liability in case of lawsuit.

The children's swing area was one of the few we saw on our tour that provided access to the handicapped. In this case, "handicapped access" consists of a firm pathway in the sand around the swing area to allow wheel-chair-bound parents to push their children in the swings. The Director said that all the city parks would have to be upgraded to provide this kind of access.

Although Corcoran Joint Unified School District is responsible for keeping the park grounds clean, the Committee observed several problems. A great deal of trash lay in the

corner of the park near the drinking fountain and alongside the fence separating the park and the school grounds. The drinking fountain dripped, and water stood in the basin. Evidently the drain was blocked. We observed a number of puncture vines in the children's play areas. These contain "goatheads," a type of thorn that can inflict a painful injury. On the basis of these observations, we concluded that this park should be better maintained.

Christmas Tree Park

Christmas Tree Park was a delightful stop on our tour. This small park has a gazebo for musical performances or other entertainment, a public address system, a bulletin board and numerous benches. Artistically designed walkways add to the charm of the park. A large mural of a mountain scene on the wall of an adjacent building gives the park the air of a movie set.

The park was named because the town Christmas tree is located at its center. Unfortunately, the redwood tree selected for this role does not appear healthy. It probably will have to be replaced in the near future. We suggest selecting another species, since we were told that this is the second redwood that has been planted in that spot.

John Maroot Park

The overall appearance of John Maroot Park on the day we visited was excellent. The park itself was clean and well-groomed. We noted that three of the picnic tables and benches were handicapped-accessible. However, we did find two problem areas that need to be taken care of. We found graffiti in the children's playground area. The worst problem lies in the public restrooms, which were dirty, marred by graffiti and littered with trash. The water faucets did not work in either restroom.

We were especially impressed with the Stephen Caymon Building (also known as the Veterans' Memorial Hall), which has recently been remodeled to serve as a community center. We found it spacious, clean and inviting. The kitchen is outstanding; it seems ideal for use for large public or private functions. The cost for rental is reasonable: \$250 for each function.

Burnham Smith Park

Burnham Smith Park is ideally located for community access, being close to the Senior Center, the child day care center, the YMCA and the baseball diamonds. We were told that the area behind the Senior Citizen's Center also has tennis courts and a small skateboard park.

The YMCA takes care of the park grounds, while the Recreation and Parks Department is responsible for repairing and replacing equipment. Overall, the park was attractive and clean with a few exceptions. We noticed that the water fountain was plugged with sand, which needed to be cleaned out, and there was a small amount of graffiti on the

playground equipment, especially the tic tac toe blocks. One swing was missing. We were told that a replacement had been ordered.

The Director pointed out a rubberized mat in the children's play area that allows handicapped access.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Corcoran Recreation and Parks Department: Hire more maintenance personnel.

Father Wyatt Park:

1. Carry out current plans to install public restrooms.
2. Replace or clean out the sand beneath the swing sets.
3. Repair or replace the broken safety clip on the infant's swing.
4. Repair or replace splintered wood on the picnic table located nearest the play area.
5. Install posts along the street sides of the park to deter joyriders from driving their cars on the grass.

Cesar Chavez Park:

1. Repair or remove the multi-level playground structure.
2. Remove puncture vines (goatheads) from the sand in the play area.
3. Repair the plugged water fountain.
4. Discuss with Corcoran Unified School District better ways of keeping the park clean.

John Maroot Park:

1. Remove or paint over graffiti in the restrooms and the tunnel slide.
2. Restore water service to the sinks in the restrooms.

Burnham Smith Park:

1. Clean out the drinking fountains.
2. Remove graffiti from the playground equipment.
3. Replace the swing.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury is impressed with the civic spirit of the Corcoran community and the Department of Public Works resourceful use of cooperative ventures with organizations such as the YMCA, local schools, the Job Training Organization and local businesses.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Hanford Building Permit
Fees
319 North Douty Street
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 585-2515

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Local Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Follow Up – Interview
August 15, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Beginning in 1997 and in succeeding years the Grand Jury has conducted an ongoing review of the City of Hanford's building permit fees. The 1997 – 1998 Grand Jury initiated the review, the 1998 – 1999 Grand Jury continued it and the 1999 – 2000 Grand Jury brought the investigation to a close. It was the conclusion of that investigation that Hanford's building permit fees were excessive and not in accordance with California State codes.

This investigation met with considerable resistance from the City of Hanford. However, in August 1999, the Hanford City Council authorized an audit of the city's finances by DMG Maximus.

The 1999-2000 Grand Jury issued a Final Report calling for adoption of one of several options presented in the DMG Maximus audit. This option would set up a fee adjustment schedule by construction type to repay building contractors who had paid the excessive fees. It would also implement an average fee strategy for all new residential building permits and adjust current fee tables for all other permits. The Grand Jury also recommended that the City of Hanford undergo an audit conducted by an outside audit firm at least every five years to ensure that it conforms to government codes.

While the Final Report was in preparation, the Hanford City Council adopted Ordinance 00-02 on February 1, 2000. This ordinance amended the Hanford Municipal Code regarding building standards to be in line with the DMG Maximus recommendation favored by the Grand Jury. Resolution 00-09-R, adopted by the Hanford City Council on March 7, 2000, implemented a new building permit fee schedule and authorized reimbursement of the excess amount paid for building permit fees for new single family residential buildings between the dates of July 1, 1999 and March 7, 2000.

FINDINGS:

To follow up on the recommendations of the 1999 – 2000 Grand Jury, this Committee interviewed the Hanford building official in charge of preparing the revised building permit fee schedule. The Committee was impressed with his presentation and helpful demeanor.

We were provided with a copy of the new fee schedule which had already been put into effect. A pleasant revelation to us was the fact was that refunds had already been made to the contractors who had paid for permits during the specified time period.

During the interview, we were told that the City of Hanford has adopted a policy of conducting internal audits every two years. An external audit by an independent firm will be conducted every five years.

The Committee's subsequent examination of the new fee schedule and regulations convinced us that the City of Hanford's implementation of new building permit fees should bring it into compliance with California State Code.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury is pleased that this long and complex issue has come to a successful resolution.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Hanford Municipal Airport
954 E. Hanford-Armona Rd.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 585-2589

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Local Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
November 28, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

Hanford Municipal Airport sits on 252 acres at the south end of town. Currently, 51 acres are leased to cotton growers and 80 acres are leased as vineyards. At present, the airport accommodates 20,000 to 25,000 flights a year.

Much of the income produced by the airport comes from hangar rental or hangar space rental. There are 24 privately owned hangars, 9 hangars owned by the City of Hanford and 30 shelters, also owned by the City of Hanford. There are plans for another twelve shelters to be built by the end of 2001. Hangars rent for \$410 to \$685 per year, providing an approximate annual income to the airport of \$63,000. Each lessee must have \$1 million liability insurance. Sixty tie downs costing \$3.00 a day are available for transients. In January and February, when local unpaved airstrips are too muddy for takeoffs, crop dusters are allowed to use the Municipal Airport. However, by city ordinance, they are restricted from using the airport while carrying herbicides or pesticides.

The City's large hanger and the old terminal building, located by the main entrance, were closed by the Fire Marshall in 1999 because of safety hazards. The Manager's office is now located in a rented trailer nearby.

The 1999-2000 Grand Jury Final Report recommended that the old terminal building be torn down and replaced with a new one that included a waiting room and restrooms for travelers, as well as offices for management. It also recommended that the adjacent hangar be renovated or rebuilt.

FINDINGS:

The Committee toured Hanford Municipal Airport to follow up on changes since last year's Grand Jury visit. We found a number of improvements had been made. First, the entire airport has been fenced. The Airport Manager, who gave us a tour of the airport, said that this keeps dogs, trespassers and even automobiles off the runway. Second, the runway has been lengthened from 3,962 feet to 5,180 feet, to allow small corporate jets to land. Third, a new runway light system has been installed. The solar-powered lights come on at dusk, and go off at 10 P.M. Pilots incoming after 10 P.M. can click the lights on via the mike on their radio. Fourth, new gates have been installed for vehicular traffic. These new gates operate on the "sleeper" system, requiring a code for the first vehicle of the

day to enter, then remaining open until closed at the end of the day. Pedestrians have 24-hour access to the runway and hangars by a gate located near the Manager's office.

The Manager explained that the old terminal building and the hangar behind it—which was probably built in the early 1900s—were condemned due to numerous electrical deficiencies and hazards. He felt that the only way of dealing with these buildings was to find a company or individual willing to build a new hangar or large building in this space. Our Committee feels that it is essential to the future development of the Municipal Airport to construct a terminal center with managerial offices and handicapped accessible restrooms.

Besides the condemned hangar and old terminal building, the area most in need of improvement is the public restroom facility, located inside the fence on the edge of the runway. It is in deplorable condition and probably needs to be replaced. It may be too late to repaint the exterior, as years of exposure to the elements have resulted in extensive dry rot in the structure. The women's restroom door could not be closed or secured; the men's restroom door could not be locked. The interior needed to be cleaned and painted. The linoleum in the women's restroom was pulling away from the under flooring and needed to be replaced. The baseboard was coming away from the wall. Also, there was graffiti on the mirror. The men's room was in slightly better condition, but needed toilet paper and needed to be cleaned. The restrooms are not handicapped accessible.

The two fire extinguishers that we noticed, one located on the exterior restroom wall and another located on the old terminal building wall, were aged and undersized, and suitable only for use for wood fires. One of them was out of date, last inspected in February 1999. We feel that the airport needs new fire extinguishers of the proper size and rating for this area.

An additional concern is the fact that there is no one present at the airport at night. There is no alarm system to summon emergency equipment if an airplane crashes making a night landing or takeoff. The Committee strongly recommends that the City of Hanford look into resolving this problem.

When asked for a "wish list" of needed improvements, the Manager said that the airport needed to enlarge the runway turnoff to accommodate larger aircraft. He also said that he hoped to develop the southwest corner of the airport for corporate or commercial aircraft, thereby increasing income for the airport.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Tear down the old terminal and build a new one with a waiting room and restrooms.
2. Replace or renovate the existing public restroom facility, including handicapped accessibility.

3. Replace the fire extinguishers.
4. Investigate the possibility of installing an automatic night alarm system.
5. Enlarge the runway turnoff.
6. Develop the southwest corner of the airport for corporate or commercial Aircraft.

COMMENTS:

The Experimental Aviation Association program called "Young Eagles" provides free flights for children, followed by family-style barbecues.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Hanford Recreation Department
City Parks
900 S 10th Ave.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 585-2561

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Local Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour/Interview
October 17, 2000
October 24, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The Parks Department is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of all city parks. These include:

1. Hidden Valley Park, located at 11th Avenue and Courtner Street
2. Earl F. Johnson Park, located on Grangeville Boulevard across from Hanford High School
3. Lacey Park, located at Douty and Florinda Streets
4. Coe Park, located on South Douty Street
5. Centennial Park, located on West Hanford-Armona Road between 11th and 12th Avenues.

FINDINGS:

The Committee went on a self-guided tour of the parks. Later the Superintendent of Hanford City Parks visited us in the Grand Jury Chambers and elaborated on what we had seen. The committee was pleased with the Superintendent's vision of developing a park north of Grangeville and an adult sports complex east of 10th Ave.

Overall, we found the parks in excellent condition, but we did find some items that needed attention. We observed a lot of broadleaf weeds in lawn areas of all the parks and feel that each park should be treated with a pre-emergent herbicide in the appropriate season.

At Hidden Valley Park there are numerous deficiencies, most of them minor. The problem that caused us the most concern is a large overgrown area beginning in the northeast corner of the park and extending diagonally up to and along the edge of the slough. It is thick with an accumulation of dead branches, dry leaves and trash. We saw numerous trails leading to the interior and evidence that the overgrown area is a hiding place for those who wish not to be seen. We feel that this area is a liability to the City. A fire could easily be set off by a careless smoker or children playing with matches. The dense undergrowth might provide a haven for a child molester or other criminals. Finally, someone could fall or become otherwise incapacitated while out of sight.

The Committee recognizes the desirability of leaving this area in a natural state. However, selective pruning, especially the lower branches of bushes and trees, and removal of trash, dead grass and leaves would reduce the City's liability while retaining the naturalistic atmosphere of this area of the park.

Some of the branches of a large tree alongside the picnic pavilion on the southeast side of the park rest on the roof of the pavilion. It is only a matter of time before they do damage. These branches should be trimmed immediately.

The bridge crossing the slough, which was mentioned in the 1999 – 2000 Grand Jury Final Report as needing repair, has been repaired, and we feel it is adequate for the time being, if a bit shaky in places. The Superintendent informed us that his department has set aside \$40,000 in the 2002 budget to replace the bridge, and we feel this is a good decision.

The Committee is concerned that children may swim or wade in the slough. Debris and broken glass in the slough pose a threat to swimmers' health and safety.

Two items needed maintenance in the restrooms. The wall-hung lavatory in the men's restroom was not securely fastened to the wall, and there was a leaking water spigot in the women's restroom.

The exercise course continues to deteriorate and needs new signs. The Superintendent of City Parks told us that the exercise course is obsolete, and the company that manufactured it is out of business. He said that a more centralized set of exercise equipment coupled with jogging paths would serve the same purpose and would be more secure from vandalism. We suggested that this might be a good Eagle Scout project.

Hidden Valley Park also had numerous gopher mounds, which present a potential hazard to unwary visitors to the park, who might trip and fall. We feel that an environmentally safe gopher eradication system, such as the Rodex 4000 recently purchased for use in Kings County Parks, would solve this problem.

Next our Committee visited Earl F. Johnson Park. Past Grand Jury Reports as far back as 1993 – 1994 have recommended that the restroom facilities at this park be replaced or repaired, but they continue to be in deplorable condition. We discussed this with the Superintendent, who said that he had requested funds to replace the restrooms, but the City Council had not been able to come to an agreement on whether to replace them or tear them down. He said he would resubmit the request in the next budget. In spite of this commitment, the Committee concluded from our conversation that the Superintendent himself was not enthusiastic about replacing the restrooms.

These restrooms, and this park in general, present the City with several problems. First, although the park is off-limits, in the past Hanford High School students tended to congregate there before and after school and at lunchtime. It is also an attractive spot for

students "cutting school." Second, tables or other structures cannot be installed in the center of the park, because it is used for flushing the water tower, and the grassy basin area must be kept clear. The Superintendent said that Earl F. Johnson is a small neighborhood park, and not intended for lengthy stays. He felt that people using it should come and stay awhile, then go home. These factors contribute to his reluctance to replace the restrooms.

We feel differently. This park could be better utilized if it were set up to encourage more extensive use by the neighborhood, thus taking some of the pressure off other parks, which are often overcrowded on the weekends. Benches and tables could be installed clear of the water basin area. This would necessitate the availability of restrooms, which we think should be installed in any event. Ours is an aging population. Many of those using neighborhood parks are grandparents and their small grandchildren. Both groups need convenient restroom facilities.

If there is a problem with students spending time in the park contrary to school policy, this is the school's problem. The school should address it.

We noticed that the barriers intended to keep cars out of park grounds on the west and southwest sides had either broken or been removed, and the lawn was marred by deep ruts. Also the sidewalk in this area was cracked and broken. This poses a danger to someone walking in this area in uneven light. The Committee feels that the barriers and the sidewalk should be replaced. This would eliminate the problem of people driving their cars on park grounds.

Like Hidden Valley Park, Earl F. Johnson Park has a problem with gophers. Park maintenance should act to eradicate them before the problem becomes unmanageable.

The sand under the slide in the children's play area is dirty, with a lot of debris, dirt and weeds evident. We observed that it is uneven, and leaves quite a drop for children using the slide. The sand ought to be cleaned and leveled.

A picnic table in the northeast corner of the park has a large hole in its center. The wooden part of the table should be replaced.

Another hazard at Earl F. Johnson Park is a six-inch discharge pipe used periodically to flush out the water tower. Jagged bits of metal inside the pipe and sharp edges on the leading edge need to be cleaned out or filed down. As it is, this pipe presents a safety hazard to anyone who might run into it. We spoke with the Superintendent about it, who agreed that a safety barrier ought to be placed around the water discharge pipe.

Some of the trees in this park need selective pruning to thin and shape them so that wind can go through their branches, and they will not uproot easily. We discussed with the Superintendent the difference between selective pruning, which is beneficial, and stubbing or topping, which is harmful. He agreed that he would brief his crews on this aspect of tree care.

Lacey Park was one of the best-kept parks we visited. It was clean with numerous facilities for local residents. We noticed that it was also well-patrolled by law enforcement. We found only two problems: a pipe exposed by the removal of a drinking fountain on the east side of the park and crumbling stucco on the east side of the wading pool. The pipe presents a hazard in that someone could fall over it, and it should be removed. The crumbling stucco, while not unsightly, allows water to collect between the stucco and the concrete underneath it. This is a hiding place for bacteria and insects that breed in damp places. It also causes the stucco to separate from the cement, a condition that will continue unless repaired.

Centennial Park is a lovely park. The Committee was especially impressed with the handicapped areas and the special fenced area for younger children. There were plenty of cement picnic tables and barbecues, as well as seating for parents watching their children at play. The Superintendent told us that this park was designed with input from local residents, and this integration of residents' concerns into park design from the ground up is reflected in its convenience and usefulness. We feel that this process invests local residents with a sense of ownership in the park, and perhaps in the long run the residents will take good care of it.

We found three things that needed attention at Centennial Park. The hand dryer in the women's restroom was broken, a lamp assembly on the light pole south of the men's restroom was broken, and there were broken and missing tiles on the men's restroom roof. We spoke with the Superintendent about these problems, and he told us that he would have them repaired. There seems to be a problem with the hand dryers, since the dryer in the women's restroom was broken when the 1999 - 2000 Grand Jury visited Centennial Park. It would seem advisable to install wall recessed hand dryers, a type used successfully in roadside rest areas.

We found Coe Park charming, although somewhat unkempt. We noticed leaves had blown against the fence and needed to be removed, and the drinking fountain leaked. Four older picnic tables in the interior of the park are past the point of repair. The hollow mulberry tree north of the tetherball poles is unsightly and liable to break; it should be removed. A Modesto ash near the southeast corner of the basketball courts is nearly dead and ought to be removed. The northernmost tetherball pole is missing the cap where the tetherball is attached and it should be repaired or replaced.

The Committee feels that some minor improvements would have a major impact on the utility of this park. The Superintendent told us that the tennis court is not used. The Committee feels that this space could be better used for other types of games, such as shuffleboard, hopscotch or foursquare. The Committee noted the absence of children's playground facilities and felt that adding this equipment would enhance family participation. Finally a matter of concern is the fact that the drinking fountain and restrooms are not handicapped accessible.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Continue with plans to develop a park north of Grangeville.
2. Develop an adult sports complex.
3. Treat each park with pre-emergent herbicide in the appropriate season.
4. Eradicate the gophers.

Hidden Valley Park:

1. Clear out underbrush and dead weeds and prune larger bushes in the overgrown area on the northeast side of the park, as well as along the slough banks.
2. Prune tree branches away from the pavilion on the southeast side of the park.
3. Continue with plans to replace the bridge.
4. Install "No swimming or wading" signs at water's edge.
5. Re-hang the wall-hung lavatory in the men's restroom.
6. Repair the leaky water outlet in the women's restroom.
7. Remove the exercise stations and replace them with a more modern centralized system.

Earl F. Johnson Park:

1. Repair or replace the restrooms.
2. Erect barriers to keep cars out of the park grounds and replace the broken sidewalk.
3. Clean and level the sand in the children's play area.
4. Put a safety barrier around the water discharge outlet.
5. Selectively prune and thin the park trees.

Lacey Park:

1. Remove the pipe exposed by removal of a drinking fountain on the east side of the park off Harris Street.
2. Repair crumbling stucco on the east side of the wading pool.

Centennial Park:

1. Replace the broken or missing tiles on the men's restroom roof.
2. Replace the lamp assembly on the light pole south of the men's restroom.
3. Repair or replace the hand dryer in the women's restroom. Investigate the possibility of installing a model that is recessed in the wall.

Coe Park:

1. Repair or replace the four older picnic tables.
2. Remove the hollow mulberry tree north of the tetherball poles and the dying Modesto ash at the northeast corner of the basketball court.
3. Remove or repair the southernmost tetherball pole.
4. Replace the drinking fountain near the women's restroom.
5. Make the drinking fountain and the restrooms handicapped accessible.
6. Revamp the tennis court to include other games.
7. Install children's playground equipment.

COMMENTS:

The City is to be commended for the vast improvement we found in the city park system.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Hanford Refuse Waste
Department
900 South 10th Ave.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 585-2550

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Local Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Complaint/Interview
April 17, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

The Hanford Refuse Division provides weekly pickup of garbage, recyclables and green waste. Garbage and recyclables are picked up on one day and green waste on another. Approximately four trucks provide commercial service and nine provide residential service. There are 14 full-time refuse collectors.

These trucks pull curbside of the refuse container and extend an automated "arm" that picks up the container, dumps its contents into the refuse compartment on the truck, then sets the container back on the ground. About every second or third house, the collector runs the packer, which compresses the refuse.

The Grand Jury received a complaint about leaking garbage trucks. The complainant said the truck that picked up their trash left fluids on the street, and sometimes green smelly biological residue. The complainant said the fluids or residue left long-lasting stains on the street. This situation raised the question whether these substances might contain disease-causing agents.

When the matter was discussed among the members of the Grand Jury, several said that they had experienced the same sort of leakage on their residential streets.

FINDINGS:

The Committee asked the Waste Disposal Manager to come to the Grand Jury chambers to discuss the problem of leaking refuse trucks. He felt that the leakage most often occurred in green waste pickup, because there is more liquid to green waste. He said that metals and sharp plastics could cause an almost undetectable slit in the seal.

He told us if drivers detect leakage, they are to report it, and the rubber seal that is supposed to prevent leakage will be replaced. Problems arise when the seal is damaged, wears out or is clogged by a buildup of compressed materials between it and the back panel of the refuse compartment.

The trucks are washed daily. The drivers are supposed to inspect the seal at this point, but sometimes there is a slit in the rubber that cannot be seen. The Manager said he would

instruct the drivers to check the seals more closely and he would inquire to see if the locking hinges on the back panel of the refuse compartment could be tightened. The Manager said it is possible that the problem has already been taken care of. The Division received a complaint about leakage earlier in the year, which resulted in the replacement of three damaged seals.

The Committee feels that this problem has been resolved as well as possible at this point, if the Manager follows up on his plan to emphasize driver inspection of the seals and tightening the hinges on the back panel. It seems to us that this sort of leakage is periodic in nature, and that citizens should be encouraged to report it when observed.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Continue checking seals on waste disposal trucks.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury appreciates the Manager's prompt response to our request for an interview, and the open way in which he discussed the problem.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Lemoore Public Works
435 B Street
Lemoore CA 93245
(559) 924-6700

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Local Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Interview and Informational Tour
March 27, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

The Committee was briefed on the Lemoore Public Works Department by its Director. Discussion centered on the city's water supply and waste water treatment.

FINDINGS:

According to the Director of Public Works, the demand for water in Lemoore is 2 million gallons per day in winter, and between 6 million and 7 million gallons per day in summer. Lemoore is currently in the process of bringing new wells online to ensure an adequate water supply for its citizens. It owns a 90-acre "well field" six miles outside Lemoore near Hickey Park, from which water is brought into town by pipeline.

The city has numerous wells and storage capacity to ensure a continuous water supply. In 1978 drought relief funds were used to build diesel-powered wells and construct storage tanks capable of containing one million gallons of water. This is in addition to an existing one-million-gallon tank at the corporation yard. Well #10 by the Candlewick Yarn mill is within city limits. It produces 2,000 gallons per minute pumped from below the "Corcoran Clay Barrier" that often limits water supplies in shallower wells. Two new wells inside city limits are set to go online when the need for additional water arises. Additional water is also available outside the city limits, including some from property southwest of Highway 41. Well #11 will be in operation by fall 2001. It will have a storage tank capable of holding between .5 million and 1 million gallons of water.

Additional water will come from a joint venture with Westhills College and Leprino Foods. Scheduled for completion by November 1, 2001, a 1.5 million gallon storage tank located west of Highway 41 will fill during off-peak hours. Another possibility is to develop additional wells in the same area.

The Director expressed some concern about the arsenic levels in water obtained from the well field. The arsenic levels there ranges in the 'teens, while water from Lemoore itself measures less than ten. The Environmental Protection Agency is expected to require treatment of water measuring ten or more parts of arsenic per million.

The Public Works Department must plan ahead, forseeing possible problems. Currently, the telemetry system for city wells is being upgraded to insure accurate measurement of

water flow and other important elements. It has pumps powered by natural gas to use if the electricity goes out. The Department is also investigating the possibility of purchasing generators for use in electrical brownouts. Finally, since the city's wells are located in various parts of the county, it is unlikely that they will all lose electrical power at the same time.

Lemoore's waste water treatment plant is located south of town across from S K Foods. It treats 2.5 million gallons of effluent a day. City officials want to increase the capacity of the treatment plant because Leprino Foods will soon increase its discharge to 2 million gallons of effluent a day. Waste water processed by the Lemoore waste water treatment plant receives secondary treatment. It is then fit for use in certain farming activities. The recycled water is used by Westlake Farms.

The Department of Public Works is currently creating a sewer master plan, monitoring rate of flow and other important characteristics of the sewer system. The Department will budget for line upgrading and other necessary expenditures over the next five to ten years. Funding would come from impact fees paid by purchasers of new construction.

Currently, Public Works employees are using two sites as the corporate yard. Most work and storage facilities are at the yard located on Cinnamon Drive at G Street. There is also "the old corporate yard" on E Street just south of the railroad tracks, which is used by parks maintenance, carpenters and city maintenance.

The Committee visited the corporate yard located on Cinnamon Street. The corporate yard contains the Water Department office, two 1 million-gallon water storage tanks and pumps that operate them, a training room for safety education, the metal shop, the Street Department office and the Maintenance Department.

We spoke with the Senior Equipment Mechanic, who told us that the corporate yard's fleet maintenance shop maintains all city vehicles with the exception of motor repair for the garbage trucks, which must be sent out. Additionally, the corporate yard repairs lawn mowers, branch chippers, edging machines, chain saws, blowers and other small machinery belonging to the city. The fleet maintenance shop has three full-time employees and one part-time employee who works for the shop 1,000 hours a year.

We also spoke with two employees in the Metal Shop. They explained what each bay or office in the corporate yard contained. We learned that the yard has six employees in the Water Department, one employee in the welding shop and six employees in the Street Department, in addition to the employees of the fleet maintenance shop mentioned above.

When asked what the yard needed, the Senior Equipment Mechanic said that the yard was "getting a little cramped." He said that his shop needed another bay and more room. Also, the bays do not have a big enough hoist to lift large engines such as those on garbage trucks. This is consistent with the goals of the Public Works Director, who said that the "ultimate long-term goal is to move Public Works out by the Waste Water Treatment Plant." This would consolidate the Department in one location and allow more

room for the corporate yard. Funding, the Director said, would come from building impact fees.

The Committee concluded that the corporate yard does an excellent job with limited space. We were especially impressed with the good nature of the employees we spoke with.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Move the corporate yard along with the Public Works Department to a consolidated location.

COMMENTS: Lemoore is to be commended for its foresight in planning for the water and waste water disposal needs of the community. The Grand Jury thanks the Director of Public Works for his graciousness and patience in directing our tour and answering our questions.

AREA OF INQUIRY:

Lemoore Recreation and
Parks Department
406 B Street
Lemoore, CA 93245
(559) 924-6735

REPORTING COMMITTEE:

Local Government

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Informational Tour
March 27, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

Lemoore is a small city in the midst of an explosion of expansion and renovation. Its population has increased from a reported 16,000 in 1997 to about 20,000 today. Keeping pace with this expansion, Lemoore is in the process of renovating its downtown, adding new public structures, such as the police station and fire station, and enlarging its parks system to keep up with the needs of the citizenry.

Lemoore has six parks: Heritage Park, located on Hanford-Armona Road east of Lemoore Avenue; Lions Park (Westfield Park), bounded by Fox Drive, Fallen Leaf Drive and Hanover Avenue; Rotary Skate Park, located at Fox and E Streets; D Street Plaza, located on D Street between Fox and Heinlen Streets; City Park, bounded by Bush, B, Fox and Heinlen Streets; and 19th Avenue Park (Vierra Field), located at 19th Avenue and Highway 198. Of these, three are being developed or under construction.

FINDINGS:

The Committee toured Lemoore's parks under the guidance of the Public Works Director. Overall, we were impressed with the care given to both structures and landscaping. Lemoore's ambitious building and improvement programs seem likely to enhance its ambiance as everybody's small hometown.

Heritage Park consists of 25 acres developed about 1992. It is very clean, with plenty of room for active youngsters to roam and play safely. The landscaping, which consists mainly of grass, trees and shrubs, is neat and appealing. The trees, many of them large cottonwoods, are beautifully pruned. Activity areas include a basketball court that doubles as a roller hockey court, tennis courts, a ball diamond used for league play, an undeveloped area that could be used for informal ball games and a children's play area that includes two age-appropriate play units.

Our attention was attracted to a "water feature," which is a storm drainage basin left in a naturalized condition with small amounts of water in it all the time. The ground leading up to the basin is elevated so that balls from baseball games will not go into the water.

The children's area was especially clean. Wood chips replaced the customary sand underfoot, and were built up around the merry-go-round to ensure the safety of the youngsters using it. Sturdy, attractive blue benches and tables gave parents a place to sit while watching their children play.

Additional fixtures included several picnic tables and barbeque grills in the front of the park, two bike racks and two drinking fountains. Most of the tables were obviously new. The sole exception had a lot of wear, but was still functional. The Director told us that the older tables were being replaced as the budget allowed and this one was on the list. He also mentioned the possibility of installing covered picnic areas at a later date.

The restroom facility was the only area of this park that we felt needed attention. Tiles had been broken off the roof. One toilet in the Ladies' room seemed to have a leak. There was water on the floor that had etched the cement. We feel this needs to be checked out.

Lions Park (Westfield Park) is a 13-acre park around and including a ponding basin. There are two play areas under construction here. The visitor can see the brightly colored play structures that are being installed. Restrooms and a parking area have yet to be built. We presume that trash receptacles will be installed during construction.

The Committee was particularly impressed with the beautiful old eucalyptus trees on the east side of the park. They have been well cared for, and we regret current plans to remove them at some future date.

The ponding basin does cause us some concern. The Director told us that it had just been drained, and we found glass and trash at the end nearest the pumps. Perhaps these will be cleaned up later when the area is completely dry. More trash was found just outside the barriers around the pumps. Both standpipes had standing water in them, which the Director said would drain. We are concerned that mosquitoes might breed in the water if it were allowed to remain for any length of time. We also feel there is a possibility that youngsters may climb or fall into the standpipes. If at all possible, to protect the city from liability, these should be equipped with heavy mesh covers or flaring collars that make them difficult to climb.

Rotary Skateboard Park consists of approximately one acre on E Street backed by the railroad tracks. It is still under construction. The cost is approximately \$200,000. This park will offer facilities for inline skating and skateboarding, as well as two basketball courts and restrooms. The Committee was assured that a chain link fence will separate the facility from the railroad tracks.

The park is envisioned as part of a downtown entertainment complex that would include a five- or six-screen movie theater, an ice cream store, an aerospace museum run in cooperation with Lemoore Naval Air Station, and an antique store.

D Street Plaza, a "pocket" park located on a single lot, was dedicated in 1997. It features a gazebo, a fountain, plentiful benches, a public address system, restrooms, handicapped-

accessible fountain and lights during the evening hours. Most of the fixtures were donated by local businesses, organizations and individuals. Music brightens the day for those who come to sit on the benches for a spell. A charming mural affords them a look at Lemoore as it used to be at the beginning of the 20th Century. In the summertime, family-friendly outdoor movies are offered weekly after sunset. We found this a charming park, a visit back in time to the days of old Victorian Lemoore.

City Park, Lemoore's oldest park, is undergoing major renovation. It covers an entire city block and is shaded by numerous old trees. The day we visited, workers were finishing cement walkways. A new children's play structure with activities for various ages had been installed. We were particularly taken by a speaking tube that offered children numerous opportunities for inventive play. There was also a row of swings for toddlers and older children.

The park affords families numerous picnic tables, five barbeque grills, a covered picnic pavilion with two large tables with benches, six horseshoe pits, a drinking fountain and a public telephone. Although we are aware that most public barbeque grills could do with a cleaning, we must mention the largest grill as being particularly in need of attention. We found the public restrooms clean and in good repair.

19th Avenue Park (Vierra Field) provides ball players with two large ball diamonds, restrooms and a concession stand. There is a track for running or walking around the park, which features cardio-vascular exercise stations. Committee members found the instructions for the exercise stations were not particularly clear. Part of this property is leased to Youth Sports for a Bicycle Motocross (BMX) race track. One of the storage buildings near the toilet and the BMX racing track is unsightly because the composition roof is warped.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Replace missing tiles on the roof of the restroom facility at Heritage Park.
2. Check out possible leak in the Ladies' room at Heritage Park.
3. Clean up trash and glass in the ponding basin and near the barriers around the pumps at Lions Park.
4. Install wire mesh cover or flared collar around the standpipes at Lions Park.
5. Clean the largest barbeque grill at City Park.
6. If the building with the warped roof at 19th Avenue Park is the responsibility of Lemoore Parks Department, it should be repaired or replaced. If maintaining it is the responsibility of Youth Sports, Lemoore Parks Department should see to it that Youth Sports resolves the problem.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury compliments Lemoore for maintaining and upgrading current city parks and for being so proactive in developing new ones to meet the needs of a growing population. We are impressed with the beauty and functionality of your parks.

SUMMARY

Local Government Committee

The Local Government Committee had a very interesting and productive year.

Informational tours were made to many city departments. Particular attention was given to the Hanford Building Department, Hanford Cemetery District, Lemoore Cemetery District, Lemoore City Parks, Lemoore Public Works, Corcoran City Parks, Hanford Municipal Airport, Hanford Refuse Waste Department and Hanford City Parks.

The Committee also conducted inquiries and interviews while researching and responding to citizen complaints. This includes several recommendations carried over from the 1999-2000 Grand Jury and complaints submitted 2000-2001. The Committee spent 400 hours following up on citizen complaints.

The Committee's attention to the Hanford Building Department has brought closure to previous Grand Juries recommendations for further investigations into overcharging of building fees. However, the 2001-2002 Grand Jury should continue the fee study with an evaluation of Kings County Building permit fees, and the completion of the investigations of the Avenal and Corcoran permit fees.

The City of Hanford's Green Waste Recycling Program has made modest strides towards state mandated goals.

The Committee was impressed with all city government department managers and employees. Cooperation was the norm in all areas.

As Chairperson I thank all members of the Local Government Committee. Without their dedication and many hours of hard work we would not have been able to complete our task.

Gary Jones, Chairperson
Dallas Schiewe, Assistant Chairperson
Eldora Triqueiro
Janet Bloyd
Mary Lou Chase
Jessie Espino
Edith Howland
Barbara Smith
Teresa Barger



Lemoore

Visitation Log



Avenal

2000-2001 Grand Jury

County Government Committee Record of Visits

Facility	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Board of Supervisors	*	*		
County Administrative Officer	*			
Human Resources – Employment	*			
Agriculture				
Commissioner / Sealer			*	
Agriculture Extension Services	*			
Alcohol and Drug Programs				
Cornerstone	*	*	*	
Kings View Outpatient Community Services	*	*	*	
Assessor / Clerk / Recorder				
Assessor/Clerk		*		
Recorder		*		
Elections	*	*		
Purchasing Agent			*	
Chemical Waste Management	*	*	*	
Human Services				
Administration		*		
Job Opportunities and Benefit Services (JOBS)		*		
Social Service Program	*	*		
Special Investigation Division	*	*		
Information Services		*	*	
Kings Area Rural Transit Agency (KART)	*	*		
Kings Waste And Recycling Authority	*	*	*	
Kings County Library				
Administration		*	*	
Armona			*	
Avenal		*	*	
Corcoran			*	
Hanford	*	*	*	
Kettleman City	*			
Lemoore	*	*	*	
Stratford	*			
Parks				
Burriss Park and Museum	*	*	*	
Hickey Park	*	*	*	
Kingston Park	*	*	*	

2000-2001 Grand Jury

County Government Committee Record of Visits

Facility	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Planning Department		*		
Public Works				
Government Center/Parks Shop	*	*	*	
County Shop			*	
Road Department				
Special Purpose and Assessing or Taxing Districts				
Clarks Fork Irrigation				
Empire West Side Irrigation			*	
Island Irrigation				
Kings County Water	*	*	*	
Laguna Irrigation				
Lakeside Irrigation			*	
Stratford Irrigation			*	
Treasurer – Tax Collector	*			
Veterans' Services/ Public Guardian	*			

2000-2001 Grand Jury

Health and Education Committee Record of Visits

Facility	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Armona Union School District				
Armona Elementary School				
Parkview School				
Central Union School District				
Akers School	*			
Central Union School	*	*		
Neutra School	*			
Stratford School				
Corcoran Joint Unified School District				
Bret Harte School		*	*	
John C. Freemont School		*	*	
Mark Twain School				
John Muir School				
Corcoran High School	*		*	
Corcoran Community Day School				
Kings Lake Education Center				
Delta View Joint Union District & School	*			
Hanford Elementary School District				
Administration		*	*	
Jefferson Elementary School	*			
James Monroe Elementary School			*	
Joe Simas Elementary School			*	
Lee Richmond Elementary School	*			
Lincoln Elementary School	*		*	
Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School	*			
Roosevelt Elementary School	*	*	*	
Washington Elementary School				
John F. Kennedy Junior High School	*			
Woodrow Wilson Junior High School				
District Central Kitchen	*	*		
Hanford Joint Union High School District				
Hanford High School			*	
Hanford West High School			*	
Health Clinics				
Avenal		*		

2000-2001 Grand Jury

Health and Education Committee Record of Visits

Facility	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Corcoran		*		
Hanford	*	*		
Kettleman City	*	*		
Lemoore	*	*		
Health Department				
Administration	*	*	*	
California Children's Services (CCS)		*	*	
Child Health & Disability Prevention (CHDP)		*	*	
Environmental Health Services	*	*	*	
Laboratory			*	
Public Health Nursing	*	*	*	
Tobacco Control Program	*	*	*	
W. I. C. Nutrition	*	*	*	
Women's Health & Family Planning	*	*	*	
Hospitals				
Corcoran District Hospital	*	*	*	
Island Union District & School				
Kings County Commission on Aging		*	*	
Congregate Meals (Senior Nutrition)		*		
Armona Center		*		
Avenal Center		*		
Corcoran Center				
Hanford Centers				
Davis Senior Center			*	
Kings Senior Day Care Center				
View Road Senior Center			*	
Lemoore Center		*		
In Home Supporting Services		*		
Meals on Wheels (home-bound seniors)		*		
Kings County Office of Education & Schools				
Administration		*		
Cyesis Program	*			
Kings County Community School		*	*	
Kings County Regional Occupation Program	*			
Special Education – Shelly Baird	*			

2000-2001 Grand Jury

Health and Education Committee Record of Visits

Facility	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Kings River-Hardwick-District & School				
Kit Carson Union School District & School				
Lakeside District				
Lakeside School				
Gardenside School	*			
Lemoore Union Elementary School District				
PW Engvall School	*			
Lemoore Elementary School				
Meadow Lane School				
Liberty Middle School	*			
Lemoore Union High School			*	
Pioneer Union School District				
Pioneer Primary School				
Pioneer Middle School				
Reef - Sunset Unified School District				
Avenal Elementary School				
Avenal High School				
Kettleman City School	*	*	*	
Reef - Sunset Middle School		*	*	
Adelante (Continuation) High School	*	*	*	
Sunrise (Continuation) High School		*		

2000-2001 Grand Jury

Law and Public Safety Committee Record of Visits

Facility	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
California State Prisons				
California State Prison - Avenal	*	*	*	
California State Prison - Corcoran	*	*	*	
Substance Abuse Treatment Facility-Corcoran		*	*	
City Fire Departments				
Hanford				
Station # 1	*	*		
Station #2	*	*		
Lemoore Volunteer Fire Station		*		
County Counsel	*	*		
Kings County Fire Department				
Departmental Office	*	*		
Burriss Fire Station # 1	*			
Hardwick Fire Station # 2	*			
Kit Carson Fire Station # 3	*	*	*	
Armona Fire Station # 5	*		*	
Island Fire Station # 6	*			
South Lemoore Fire Station # 7	*			
Guernsey Fire Station # 8	*			
Kettleman City Fire Department # 9	*			
Stratford Fire Station # 10	*			
Corcoran Fire Station # 11	*		*	
Avenal Fire Station # 12	*			
District Attorney				
Civil Investigations				
Criminal Investigators				
Family Support Investigators	*			
Family and Child Support Division	*			
Office				
Prosecuting Attorneys	*			
Minor's Advocate				
Police Departments				
Corcoran Police Department	*		*	
Hanford Police Department	*	*		
Lemoore Police Department	*	*		
Chaplain		*		

2000-2001 Grand Jury

Law and Public Safety Committee Record of Visits

Facility	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Probation Department				
Administration	*	*	*	
Boot Camp	*	*	*	
Female Treatment Center			*	
Gang Task Force	*	*		
Juvenile Center/Inmate Health	*	*	*	
Sheriff's Department				
Administration	*	*	*	
Animal Control	*	*	*	
Contract Law Enforcement - Avenal	*			
Coroner				
Emergency Dispatch	*	*	*	
Jails				
Main Jail/Inmate Health	*	*	*	
Branch Jail/Inmate Health	*	*	*	
Narcotic Task Force	*	*		
Satellite Stations/Substations				
Armona	*			
Corcoran	*			
Hanford	*			
Kettleman City	*			
Stratford	*			

2000-2001 Grand Jury

Local Government Committee Record of Visits

Facility	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Avenal				
City Clerk	*			
City Manager	*			
Finance Director	*			
Mayor & City Council	*	*	*	
Planning Department	*		*	
Public Works	*		*	
Building Maintenance	*			
Road Department	*			
Sewage Department	*			
Solid Waste Department	*			
Shop Facilities	*			
Water Department	*			
Recreation & Parks Department	*			
Floyd Rice Park	*			
Cemetery Districts				
Corcoran	*			
Hanford				
Hanford Cemetery	*	*	*	
Calvary Cemetery	*	*	*	
Kingsriver Cemetery		*	*	
Lakeside Cemetery		*	*	
Lemoore				
Lemoore Cemetery			*	
Grangeville Cemetery			*	
Community Service Districts				
Armona				
Office	*			
Parks & Recreation	*			
Waste Water Treatment Plant				
Home Garden				
Office				
Parks & Recreation				
Kettleman City				
Office				
Parks & Recreation	*			

2000-2001 Grand Jury

Local Government Committee Record of Visits

Facility	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Public Works	*			
Stratford				
Office				
Parks & Recreation	*			
Public Works				
Corcoran				
Building Department				
City Clerk	*			
Mayor & City Council	*			
City Manager	*	*		
Finance Manager	*			
Planning Department	*			
Public Works Department	*			
Recreation & Parks	*			
Burnham Smith Park	*		*	
Cesar Chavez Park			*	
Christmas Tree Park			*	
John Maroot Park			*	
Father Wyatt Park			*	
Road Department				
Sewage Department	*			
Water Department	*			
Hanford				
City Clerk				
City Council	*			
City Manager	*			
Finance Manager	*	*		
Municipal Airport	*	*	*	
Parks & Recreation Department	*	*		
Centennial Park	*	*	*	
Civic Center Park	*			
Coe Park	*	*	*	
Earl F. Johnson Park	*	*	*	
Hanford Community Garden	*			
Hidden Valley Park	*	*	*	
Lacey Park	*	*	*	

2000-2001 Grand Jury

Local Government Committee Record of Visits

Facility	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Longfield Center	*	*		
Municipal Swimming Pool				
South Harris Softball Park				
Skateboard Park				
Youth Athletic Complex				
Planning Department		*	*	
Public Works Director		*		
Building Maintenance				
Refuse Waste Department	*			
Sewage Department	*			
Road Department	*			
Shop Facilities				
Waste Water Treatment Plant		*		
Water Department	*			
Lemoore				
Building Maintenance	*			
City Clerk				
City Council		*		
City Manager		*		
Finance Director		*		
Planning Department	*		*	
Public Works Department			*	
Refuse Department				
Road Department				
Sewage department			*	
Shop Facilities			*	
Water Department			*	
Recreation & Parks Department				
19 th Avenue Park (Vierra Field)	*	*	*	
Heritage Park (Hanford-Armona Road)			*	
Lemoore City Park			*	
Plaza Park			*	
Skate Board Park			*	
Westfield Lions Park			*	

