

Rec'd 10-30-07



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
County Administrative Office
Interoffice Memo

DATE: September 26, 2007
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Stephanie J. Larsen, Assistant County Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: **Response to 2006-07 Grand Jury re Courthouse Security and Sheriff's Office Repeater Sites**

In its 2006-07 Final Report, the Grand Jury made findings and recommendations regarding Courthouse Security and the County's communications repeater sites. The County Administrative Office has investigated the issues. (Please note that the Risk Manager no longer supervises the Communications Division; oversight of Communications has been shifted to this Assistant County Administrative Officer). This memo serves as the proposed County response to the Grand Jury:

COURTHOUSE SECURITY (Grand Jury Report #2007-LJ-03)

Finding/Recommendation 1:

The Grand Jury finds that County Ordinance 2243, passed April 14, 2001, has not been implemented. This ordinance requires "all persons entering the County Courthouse to enter through designated entry screening areas and submit their persons and property to screening for weapons." The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors should implement County Ordinance 2243.

RESPONSE: *Agree, and implementation of the recommendation is in progress. The Humboldt County Courthouse was constructed in 1959, approximately 42 years before current security standards were developed by the State of California in 2001. Installation of effective perimeter weapons screening stations requires physical modifications to the Fourth Street and Fifth Street entrances to*

accommodate weapons screening equipment, allow for effective circulation, and to comply with federal Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Courthouse security is a joint need and responsibility of both Humboldt County Superior Court and the County of Humboldt. Both entities have been working together on this project. Humboldt County Superior Court has secured \$500,000 in funding from the State Administrative Office of the Courts towards the construction of the needed building modifications. The County's intent is to pick up the remainder of the costs that exceed \$500,000 (currently estimated at \$161,000).

On September 18, 2007, the County Public Works Department presented plans and specifications for the building modifications to the Board of Supervisors with a request to solicit construction bids for the project. Bids are scheduled to be opened on October 16, 2007.

Construction will occur in two phases. Phase I consists of the more-extensive modifications on the Fourth Street side; Phase II includes modifications to the Fifth Street entrance. Both phases are estimated to be completed by July 2008, at which time perimeter weapons screening can take place as envisioned in Ordinance 2243 (Chapter 7 of the Humboldt County Code, Sections 267-1 through 267-6). Perimeter weapons screening will be a joint effort between Humboldt County Superior Court, the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, and the County of Humboldt.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPEATER SITES (Grand Jury Report #2007-JL-14)

Finding/Recommendation 1 (Horse Mountain):

The Horse Mountain repeater site has no fuel gauge on the generator propane tank. The Office of Risk Management should install a fuel gauge on the Horse Mountain site.

RESPONSE: Agree. The County Administrative Office has placed a work order to install a fuel gauge on the Horse Mountain site. We thank the Grand Jury for bringing this matter to our attention.

Finding/Recommendation 2 (Shelter Cove):

Shelter Cove is not covered by the Sheriff's communication system. The Office of Risk Management should commission a study to determine the cost and feasibility of establishing reliable radio communication with Shelter Cove.

RESPONSE: Agree. Communication with Shelter Cove is difficult because of the physical terrain of the area. The Kings Range drops down sharply and essentially blocks communications to Shelter Cove from our repeater sites. Various work-arounds have been developed; however, communication remains "spotty" and is not ideal. The County commissioned a communications study – entitled the Interoperable Communications Plan-- in 2006. The Plan was conceived as a countywide solution to maximize interoperable radio coverage as much as is cost-effective given the County's rugged terrain. The cost of implementing the plan is approximately \$5.2 million. Two specific suggestions for improving communications to and from Shelter Cove include: (1) installing a repeater at a Bureau of Land Management vault located in the area or (2) installing a booster at the Grasshopper Lookout in the Panther Gap area north of Shelter Cove. The Communications Division of the County Administrative Office will investigate the feasibility and cost of these alternatives.

Finding/Recommendation 3 (Rogers Peak):

A potential electrical hazard exists at Rogers Peak where electrical supply lines are attached to the side of the metal shipping container in which the repeater equipment is located. The Office of Risk Management should have this potential hazard inspected by a qualified electrician and take any recommended corrective action.

RESPONSE: Agree. Although a licensed electrician installed the electrical supply lines originally, the County can have them inspected to determine if there is a potential safety hazard. The County contracts with Commercial Radio and Electronics (CRE) of Eureka to maintain the repeater sites. CRE has been asked to inspect the electrical lines.

Finding/Recommendation 4 (Blocked Transmissions):

The current system allows transmissions from one station to block transmissions from other stations and from dispatch. The Office of Risk Management should contract with a competent communications company to determine if the system can be improved.

RESPONSE: Agree. Communications overrides can occur occasionally due to the County's one-frequency radio system. Typically, overrides can occur if, for example, Dispatch is attempting to communicate with Garberville, and another Deputy in Hoopa or McKinleyville unknowingly attempts to contact Dispatch on that same frequency at the same time. The Communications study recommends petitioning the Federal Communications Commission for authority to utilize a second frequency. The Communications Division of the County Administrative

Office will study the cost and feasibility of implementing this component of the overall Communications Plan.

Finding/Recommendation 5 (Communication of Maintenance Needs)

Chain-of-command requirements hamper the efforts to inform the Office of Risk Management when service is needed. The Office of Risk Management, the Sheriff's Office, and the Office of Emergency Services should create a liaison committee to establish a method where the system users can communicate their routine needs directly to the Office of Risk Management.

RESPONSE: Disagree that chain-of-command requirements hamper efforts to inform the Communications Division when service is needed. (Please see page 5 of the Sheriff's response for more detail). The recommendation to create a liaison committee has been implemented.