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JUN - 4 2010

TRINITY COUNTY
SUPERIOR COURT

**TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY
2009-2010**

FILED



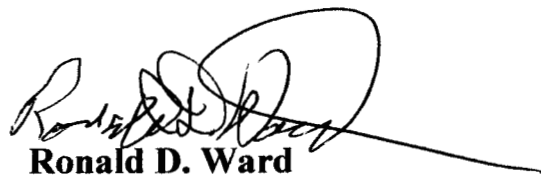
JUN - 7 2010

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
COUNTY OF TRINITY
BY: STACI WARNER, DEPUTY CLERK

**Special Districts Committee
SDR2009/2010-001
Final Report**

Special Districts Review

Approved May 4, 2010



Ronald D. Ward

Approved
June 7, 2010

2009-2010 Trinity County Grand Jury

Special Districts Committee

Special Districts Review

Summary

Understanding that these economic times have placed additional challenges on the Special Districts, the 2009-2010 Grand Jury conducted a survey to assess how these challenges are affecting the Trinity County Special Districts.

Background

Due to budget constraints the State of California has reduced funding which was previously available to the counties. This in turn, affects the funding the County has available. The general state of the economy has also impacted the Special Districts, reducing their tax revenues, assessments and donations.

In addition to the loss of funding, the Fire Departments and Service Districts face the difficulty of attracting volunteers and certifying and recertifying these volunteers to the levels required by the State.

During recent years a number of Fire Departments were severely impacted by lack of volunteers and had to take major steps to return their departments to a level where they could competently provide service. To achieve this they held Town Hall Meetings, involved the community, and are continuing their communication efforts. Most of them also now have Mutual Aid Agreements with other local Fire Departments, and where appropriate, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) and the United States Forest Service (USFS).

Method of Investigation

A survey was developed requesting information on funding resources, problems being encountered, steps being taken to overcome them, lessons learned and current status. All Special Districts, (with the exception of Coffee Creek whose response is in process) responded, providing details on many of the issues they are facing.

Discussion

The Community Service Districts/Fire Departments have experienced the most impact to their funding resources. This includes loss of funds from Trinity County for Workmen's Compensation premiums, reduced property tax revenue, reduced donations, people opting out of paying assessments due to the economy, and Loss of Title III State funding.

Attracting and retaining volunteers is a major issue. To maintain the level of training required by the State, most departments hold weekly training sessions. The Fire Departments can earn money when strike teams assist Cal Fire and the USFS during fire season, but all strike team personnel must have the minimum National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) certification, a “Red-Card”. They also must have appropriate protective wildland gear, which poses another expense for the Districts.

It was noted that local training is critical in attracting and qualifying new Volunteer Fire Department personnel. A recent Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Refresher course offered by Shasta College in Weaverville was cancelled due to lack of enrollment.

Many of the fire engines, rescue vehicles and water tenders owned and operated by the volunteer fire departments are at least 30 to 40 years old. Maintenance of these vehicles is an ongoing issue. Where possible, maintenance is performed in-house. Newer, or upgraded vehicles, are usually acquired through funding sources such as grants. However, these may require some percentage of matching funds.

Maintenance, and expansion, of the firehouse premises, or other associated facilities, is also an issue that the Fire Departments have to address on a continual basis.

Ruth Lake Community Service District noted problems particular to their area. They expressed concern about the lack of law enforcement in Southern Trinity. To provide law enforcement during weekends and holidays, they contract with the Trinity County Sheriff at a cost of \$7,200 per season. They are also dealing with the threat of lake closure due to the Quagga/Zebra Mussel infestation. This has required the introduction of a boat inspection program, with stickers to signify certain categories of boats, and they have had to block off unauthorized boat launching sites. They have worked with the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District to generate a plan and provide some funding. They are hopeful of funding from the Department of Boating and Waterways to upgrade the Marina.

In the past audit compliance has been an issue for some of the Special Districts. It was noted that at this time only one District, Post Mountain, is out of audit compliance. However, they have recently reorganized and are in process of getting their books in order to facilitate an audit.

The Trinity Public Utilities District (TPUD) has its own set of issues primarily related to one-size-fits-all State legislation. TPUD is constantly working with Washington, D.C. and Sacramento on issues related to Deregulation and Renewables Portfolio Standard.

The primary problem being encountered by the Trinity County Waterworks District in Hayfork is the substantial increase in State fees, which has to be resolved by passing the cost on to their customers.

Findings/Recommendations

Finding 1:

The Volunteer Fire Departments are under constant strain to acquire, train and retain volunteers and maintain their aging equipment. They are to be commended for their efforts.

Recommendation 1:

None.

Finding 2:

The County has reduced the funds to the Fire Departments to cover their Workmen's Compensation premiums.

Recommendation 2:

Recommend that the County return the Workmen's Compensation reimbursements to the Fire Departments to the previous levels as soon as economically feasible.

Finding 3:

Volunteers experience difficulty in obtaining local EMT training.

Recommendation 3:

Recommend that the County open a dialog with Shasta College to ensure availability of local EMT Training.

Finding 4:

Ruth Lake Community Service District has to contract for law enforcement coverage with the Sheriff Department during holidays and weekends.

Recommendation 4:

Provide Southern Trinity with appropriate County funded law enforcement as soon as possible.

Finding 5:

Ruth Lake CSD has a special set of issues related to the Quagga/Zebra Mussel infestation.

Recommendation 5:

None. The Ruth Lake CSD is commended for the proactive steps they have taken, and are continuing to take, to address this issue.

Finding 6:

All Districts are in audit compliance with the exception of Post Mountain.

Recommendation 6:

The Post Mountain Board should persist in their efforts to bring their audit into compliance.

Finding 7:

The Trinity Public Utilities District is representing the needs of Trinity County in Washington, D.C. and Sacramento.

Recommendation 8:

None.

Responses Required

In accordance with California Penal Code 933.05 a response is required as indicated below.

<u>Respondent</u>	<u>Finding/Recommendation</u>	<u>Due date</u>
Trinity County Sheriff	4	60 Days
Post Mountain PUD	6	60 Days
Auditor-Controller	6	60 Days
Board of Supervisors	2, 3, 4	90 Days

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

Bibliography

1. National Wildfire Coordination Group Standards
2. Quagga/Zebra Mussel Infestation of Western Water Facilities presentation dated June 24, 2008

3. Invasive Species Alert from Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District dated April 16, 2009
4. Report from Trinity County Auditor-Controller on Special District audit status dated March 4, 2010
5. Deregulation, California electricity crisis, Wikipedia
6. California's Renewables Portfolio Standard, 2002 Senate Bill 1078 and 2006 Senate Bill 107



TRINITY COUNTY

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ANGELA BICKLE, ASSISTANT AUDITOR/CONTROLLER
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AUG 20 2010
TRINITY COUNTY
SUPERIOR COURT

*Received
11/10/10
8/25/10*

TO: The Honorable James P. Woodward,
Judge of the Trinity Superior Court

FROM: Marilyn Horn, Auditor-Controller

Marilyn Horn

SUBJECT: Response to Recommendations of the 2009-10 Trinity County
Grand Jury Report "Special District Review"

DATE: July 26, 2010

The Grand Jury Finance and Administration Committee have requested a written response to their final report on Compliance on Annual Audits. In my capacity as Auditor – Controller my response is as follows:

Finding #1 Response: I agree. The Auditor's Office will continue to work with the Post Mountain Board to obtain their annual audit.

Recommendation #1 Requires further review to determine the appropriate time frame.

cc: Wendy Tyler, Deputy CAO/Clerk of the Board



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
TRINITY COUNTY

101 Memorial Drive, P.O. Box 1228
Weaverville, CA 96093
(530) 623-2611

LORRAC CRAIG, Sheriff/Coroner
ERIC PALMER, Undersheriff

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JUL - 6 2010

**TRINITY COUNTY
SUPERIOR COURT**

Date: August 5, 2010

To: James P. Woodward
Judge of the Trinity County Superior Court

From: Lorrac Craig
Sheriff, Trinity County

Re: Grand Jury Report 2009-2010
SDR2009/2010-001

Finding #4:

Ruth Lake Community Service District law enforcement contract

Response #4:

The contract serves to give the service district additional law enforcement resources on weekends during the summer months. The County general fund will continue to be insufficient to provide additional coverage in that area on a regular basis for at least the next year.

This office has secured a grant that will hire another officer as a resident deputy. The actual process will take the better part of this year to fulfill after the grant is funded



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TRINITY COUNTY
SUPERIOR COURT

TRINITY COUNTY

Board of Supervisors

P.O. BOX 1613, WEAVERVILLE, CALIFORNIA 96093

PHONE (530) 623-1217 FAX (530) 623-8365

TO: The Honorable James Woodward,
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

FROM: Trinity County Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: Response to 2009-10 Trinity County Grand Jury
Special Districts review

DATE: September 7, 2010

Reverend
[Signature]
9/14/10

The Grand Jury Special Districts Review committee has requested a written response to their final report on the Special Districts Review. The Board of Supervisors' response is as follows:

Finding #2: The County has reduced the funds to the Fire Departments to cover their Workman's Compensation premiums.

Response: The Board disagrees with the finding. The amount of funding allocated for reimbursement to the Fire Departments for Work Comp premiums was adjusted based on the requests received by the Fire Departments for reimbursement using figures covering a span of 5 years.

Recommendation 2: Recommend that the County return the Workman's Compensation reimbursements to the Fire Departments to the previous levels as soon as economically feasible.

Response: Will not be implemented at this time. Until such time as the Fire Departments show the need for the funding to be increased, the Board will continue to use the funds for other emergent needs.

Finding 3: Volunteers experience difficulty in obtaining local EMS training.

Response: The Board neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding. Within Trinity County there is an active Fire Chiefs Association and all departments are in theory "a member" of that association. The Fire Chiefs Association works well with partners outside the County for training purposes.

Recommendation 3: Recommend that the County open a dialog with Shasta College to ensure availability of local EMT Training.

JUDY PFLUEGER
DISTRICT 1

JUDY MORRIS
DISTRICT 2

ROGER JAEGEL
DISTRICT 3

HOWARD FREEMAN
DISTRICT 4

WENDY OTTO
DISTRICT 5

Response: Needs more analysis: While the Board supports Shasta College and its educational opportunities for the residents of Trinity County, the ultimate decision as to what classes will be offered locally in Trinity County rests with the Shasta-Tehama-Trinity Joint Unified School District Board of Directors. However, the Board does not have an objection to making a request to Shasta College regarding EMT training and can appoint a Supervisor to do so.

Finding 4: Ruth Lake Community Services District has to contract for law enforcement coverage with the Sheriff's department during holidays and weekends.

Response: The Board agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 4: Provide Southern Trinity with appropriate County funded law enforcement as soon as possible.

Response: Has been implemented: The Board allocates funding to the Trinity County Sheriff's Department on an annual basis. How those funds are spent county-wide is the responsibility of the Sheriff, a county-wide elected official. There is no mechanism within the Sheriff's Department budget or the annual budgeting process for the County that allows for specifying which areas of the County the allocated funds will be spent in.