

**Trinity County Grand Jury  
2009-2010**

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JUN - 4 2010

TRINITY COUNTY  
SUPERIOR COURT

**FILED**

JUN - 7 2010

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

**Finance and Administration Committee  
FAR2009/2010-008  
Final Report**

**Trinity County Vehicle  
Practice and Procedure Investigation**

**Approved May 18, 2010**

  
**Ronald D. Ward**

approved.  
June 7, 2010

## **2009-2010 Trinity County Grand Jury**

### **Finance and Administration Committee**

#### **Trinity County Vehicle Practice and Procedure Investigation**

##### **Summary**

The Trinity County Grand Jury in response to a citizen complaint reviewed the practices and procedures governing Trinity County vehicles, and their usage. It was found that department heads were without a clear accounting process to monitor vehicle usage, mileage, areas traveled and fueling process.

##### **Background**

The Trinity County Grand Jury assigned its Finance and Administration Committee to investigate the use of Trinity County vehicles. The focus of the investigation was to identify the practices and procedures Trinity County Administrators use to monitor and control the usage of County vehicles.

##### **Method of Investigation**

The Committee interviewed Trinity County department heads from Health and Human Services, Department of Transportation, the Sheriff's Department, Office of the Controller, and the Personnel Department. Information was gathered in respect to the guidelines for usage, maintenance and fueling. Corroborating documentation and verifications of technical equipment/software was compiled as substantiation.

##### **Discussion**

Trinity County department heads, along with support personnel, were interviewed beginning in December 2009, regarding practices and procedures pertaining to County vehicle usage. While there was a general consensus that County vehicles were not to be used for any activity other than County business, there was no specific method in place for such monitoring. It was also found that there was a deficiency in the guidelines set forth for determining the operating area of County vehicles. The question of proper usage, as in a Sheriff Deputy driving a vehicle home, was ambiguous, with no out-of-County policy.

The Committee gathered documentation for cards used to fuel vehicles, number of vehicles, and assignment of vehicles, fuel consumption, billing process and monitoring procedures. After reviewing the number of vehicles and their uses, it was determined that Trinity County was operating at an appropriate level. The assignment of vehicles

varied in each department with no set practice, but a program that best fit those departments' needs.

It was found that there are a number of practices in place regarding fuel cards. These practices range from cards assigned to individuals, cards assigned to and remaining in vehicles, to a process of checking out both a car and fuel card using a sign out log. The rationale for assigning cards to individuals was well founded in most cases, and the signing out of both car and fuel card gave a good accounting of who, where and when a usage was taking place. However, the placement or assignment of a card to a vehicle opened a large window of opportunity for misappropriation of County funds. This situation would not be as problematic if the current fueling site was brought current.

It was determined that the County has never implemented the full capability of the automated fueling station computer program. The current program parameters being used allow the user to bypass the input of both mileage and vehicle identification. This information is valuable to the verification of which vehicle or equipment is being fueled, as well as to the performance of that vehicle.

The Committee found that there is no written policy with regard to who can take a vehicle home on a full-time basis. This is primarily an issue with the Sheriff's Department where all deputies and the Sheriff take their assigned vehicle home. The deputies are effectively on duty "door-step to door-step". The issue raised with this practice is when a deputy lives outside the County, since he or she has no jurisdiction outside the County. There is no provision for deputies to begin or end work when he or she crosses the County line. There is also no provision for the fuel consumed to bring the deputy to and from the County line. It is possible for a deputy to live outside the County and travel no further than deputies that live in the County, but the issue of when a deputy is on duty and the cost of fuel is a valid concern.

It should be noted that currently no deputies or other County employees living outside the County take assigned vehicles home although this has not always been the case.

### **Findings/Recommendations**

#### **Finding 1:**

The committee found the monitoring of fuel and the vehicles in general varied from department to department, with a lack of County administrative guidelines in place.

#### **Recommendation 1:**

Trinity County should implement a standardized practice for all departments regarding the specific requirements and usage of County vehicles.

Finding 2:

The fueling report issued to each department is being used as nothing more than a billing tool.

Recommendation 2:

A practice similar to the credit card certification signature process should also be developed for the accounting of fueling and the monitoring of the fuel report. This would require that the employee and the department head sign the report on charges each month certifying to the accuracy and validity of the charges.

Finding 3:

The fueling report can be used to monitor fuel usage, by individuals, vehicles, or both. This report can also be used to assess the performance of a department's fleet and the mileage of each unit.

Recommendation 3:

Guidelines should be implemented to better aid department heads with proper vehicle uses, improved fuel accountability, and improved vehicle assessment.

Finding 4:

There is no set procedure for the issuing of fuel cards, allowing each department to have its own practices.

Recommendation 4:

Trinity County should implement a standardized practice for all departments regarding the issuance of fuel cards.

Finding 5:

The automated fueling process is currently using a program that has not been fully implemented, allowing for specific data to be omitted from reports. Fueling reports are not being used to audit mileage or fuel consumption, but only act as a billing tool.

Recommendation 5:

The County should contact the vendor of the current fueling program to enable the software being used to completely gather the data being requested at the automated pumping station. This data would better aid department administrators in the accounting of fuel consumption, mileage, and the overall assessment of each County vehicle's usage. These programming features were found to be a simple function that the current

facilitator can implement on site with no cost to the County. These changes in policies and procedures could result in significant savings for the County.

Finding 6:

No policy exists that specifies when deputies start and stop work when a deputy lives outside of the County.

Recommendation 6:

Policy should be generated which specifies that deputies living outside the County start work when they cross the County line.

Finding 7:

At this time no policy exists which specifies how far away from the Sheriff's Department the Sheriff or deputies can live.

Recommendation 7:

There are currently no remotely stationed deputies, and current policy allows that work starts from the location of the deputy's home. When hiring deputies in the future, the County should consider where the prospective deputy lives or would live in order to be effectively responsive to the community.

**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>
Board of Supervisors	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	90 days
CAO	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	60 days
Sheriff	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	60 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.



# TRINITY COUNTY

## Office of the County Administrator

DERO B. FORSLUND

County Administrative Officer

P.O. BOX 1613, WEAVERVILLE, CALIFORNIA 96093-1613

PHONE (530) 623-1382 FAX (530) 623-8365

**RECEIVED**

SEP 13 2010

TRINITY COUNTY  
SUPERIOR COURT

*Received  
9/14/10*

TO: The Honorable Anthony Edwards,  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

FROM: Dero B. Forslund, CAO

SUBJECT: Response to Recommendations of 2009-10  
Grand Jury Finance and Administration Committee Final Report

Re Trinity County Vehicle Practice and Procedure Investigation

DATE: August 30, 2010

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The Grand Jury Finance and Administration Committee has requested a written response to their final report on the Trinity County Vehicle Practice and Procedure Investigation. In my capacity as County Administrative Officer, my response is as follows:

#### Finding 1:

The committee found the monitoring of fuel and the vehicles in general varied from department to department, with a lack of County administrative guidelines in place.

Response: We concur

#### Recommendation 1:

Trinity County should implement a standardized practice for all departments regarding the specific requirements and usage of County vehicles.

Response: Requires investigation. The current usage of County vehicles is implemented on a department by department basis due to the varying needs of each department. A review will be completed of departmental uses to determine the feasibility of a standardized policy within the fiscal year.

Finding 2:

The fueling report issued to each department is being used as nothing more than a billing tool.

Response: We concur

Recommendation 2:

A practice similar to the credit card certification signature process should also be developed for the accounting of fueling and the monitoring of the fuel report. This would require that the employee and the department head sign the report on charges each month certifying to the accuracy and validity of the charges.

Response: Additional information is needed to determine the feasibility of the recommendation. A review of software capacity will be implemented this fiscal year.

Finding 3:

The fueling report can be used to monitor fuel usage, by individuals, vehicles, or both. This report can also be used to assess the performance of a department's fleet and the mileage of each unit.

Response: We concur

Recommendation 3:

Guidelines should be implemented to better aid department heads with proper vehicle uses, improved fuel accountability, and improved vehicle assessment.

Response: A review of available data will be implemented to determine the feasibility of creating the recommended guidelines. Review to take place within the fiscal year.

Finding 4:

There is no set procedure for the issuing of fuel cards, allowing each department to have its own practices.

Response: We concur

Recommendation 4:

Trinity County should implement a standardized practice for all departments regarding the issuance of fuel cards.

Response: The current use of fuel cards will be reviewed to determine feasibility of recommendation. Review to take place this fiscal year.

#### Finding 5:

The automated fueling process is currently using a program that has not been fully implemented, allowing for specific data to be omitted from reports. Fueling reports are not being used to audit mileage or fuel consumption, but only act as a billing tool.

Response: We concur

#### Recommendation 5:

The County should contact the vendor of the current fueling program to enable the software being used to completely gather the data being requested at the automated pumping station. This data would better aid department administrators in the accounting of fuel consumption, mileage, and the overall assessment of each County vehicle's usage. These programming features were found to be a simple function that the current facilitator can implement on site with no cost to the County. These changes in policies and procedures could result in significant savings for the County.

Response: The functions of the software will be reviewed to determine feasibility of recommendation. Review to be completed this fiscal year.

#### Finding 6:

No policy exists that specifies when deputies start and stop work when a deputy lives outside of the County

Response: We concur

#### Recommendation 6:

Policy should be generated which specifies that deputies living outside the County start work when they cross the County line.

Response: While no policy exists in the past when a deputy lived outside the County, the deputy was required to leave the County vehicle within the County. This policy will be reviewed and implemented when needed.

#### Finding 7:



At this time no policy exists which specifies how far away from the Sheriff's Department the Sheriff or deputies can live.

Response: We concur

Recommendation 7:

There are currently no remotely stationed deputies, and current policy allows that work starts from the location of the deputy's home. When hiring deputies in the future, the County should consider where the prospective deputy lives or would live in order to be effectively responsive to the community.

Response: Further review is required. Requiring a specific residence location by a deputy would require a review of the union labor contracts and may impact how the Sheriff allocates staffing. Review will be implemented this fiscal year.



**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**

*Reviewed  
8/27/10*

Date: August 19, 2010

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

From: Lorrac Craig  
Sheriff, Trinity County

Re: Trinity County Grand Jury Report FAR2009/2010-008  
Trinity County Vehicle Practice and Procedure Investigation

Finding #1, #2, #3, #4, #5:

The above listed findings all relate to fuel cards, fuel usage, and vehicle mileage and the county setting down written guidelines for the various county agencies

Response #1, #2, #3, #4, #5:

The Sheriff's Office assigns fuel cards and gas credit cards to each individual officer. Their fuel usage is assigned to their respective vehicles and mileage for each vehicle is maintained at the Sheriff's office. There is no process in place for the officer or the Sheriff to sign off on the usage but reports can be generated in the event a complaint is received.

Finding #6:

There is no policy regarding start/stop times for deputies that live out of county

Response #6:

Patrol Deputies have assigned shifts that are written on a schedule. Should a deputy live out of county, their shift starts when they arrive at the office to pick up their patrol car. Deputies are required to start/stop within a few minutes of their assigned shift.

Finding #7:

No policy specifying where a Deputy can live.

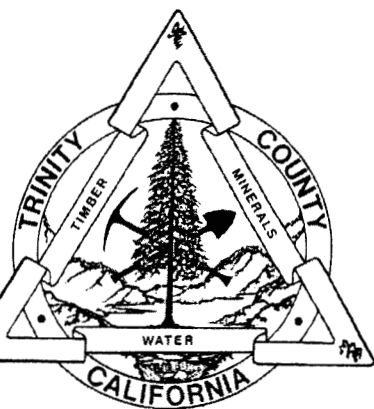
Response #7:

Current case law prohibits a county from dictating where a deputy can live or how far from the office they can live. In the case of a resident deputy, living areas can be assigned because the deputy is paid additional money. If the deputy decides he does not want the additional financial benefits, he can move to wherever.

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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  
Finance and Administration Committee  
Final Report on Vehicle Practice and Procedure Investigation

DATE: September 21, 2010

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The Grand Jury Finance and Administration Committee has requested a written response to their final report on the Vehicle Practice and Procedure Investigation. The Board of Supervisors' response is as follows:

**Finding #1:** The committee found the monitoring of fuel and the vehicles in general varied from department to department, with a lack of County administrative guidelines in place.

**Response:** Agree.

**Recommendation 1:** Trinity County should implement a standardized practice for all departments regarding the specific requirements and usage of County vehicles.

**Response:** Requires further analysis. Each department manages county vehicle usage based upon their unique needs. By the beginning of the next fiscal year, departmental uses will be reviewed to determine the feasibility of a standardized policy.

**Finding 2:** The fueling report issued to each department is being used as nothing more than a billing tool.

**Response:** Agree.

**Recommendation 2:** A practice similar to the credit card certification signature process should also be developed for the accounting of fueling and the monitoring of the fuel report. This would require that the employee and the department head sign the report on charges each month certifying to the accuracy and validity of the charges.

JUDY PFLUEGER  
DISTRICT 1

JUDY MORRIS  
DISTRICT 2

ROGER JAEGLER  
DISTRICT 3

HOWARD FREEMAN  
DISTRICT 4

WENDY OTTO  
DISTRICT 5

**Response:** Requires further analysis. The software capacity must be reviewed to determine if this is possible. This review will take place during this fiscal year.

**Finding 3:** The fueling report can be used to monitor fuel usage, by individuals, vehicles, or both. This report can also be used to assess the performance of a department's fleet and the mileage of each unit.

**Response:** Agree.

**Recommendation 3:** Guidelines should be implemented to better aid department heads with proper vehicle uses, improved fuel accountability, and improved vehicle assessment.

**Response:** Requires further analysis. A review will be implemented within this fiscal year to determine if creation of guidelines is feasible.

**Finding 4:** There is no set procedure for the issuing of fuel cards, allowing each department to have its own practices.

**Response:** Agree.

**Recommendation 4:** Trinity County should implement a standardized practice for all departments regarding the issuance of fuel cards.

**Response:** Requires further analysis. Issuance of fuel cards will be reviewed by June 30, 2010.

**Finding 5:** The automated fueling process is currently using a program that has not been fully implemented, allowing for specific data to be omitted from reports. Fueling reports are not being used to audit mileage or fuel consumption, but only act as a billing tool.

**Response:** Agree.

**Recommendation 5:** The County should contact the vendor of the current fueling program to enable the software being used to completely gather the data being requested at the automated pumping station. This data would better aid department administrators in the accounting of fuel consumption, mileage, and the overall assessment of each County vehicle's usage. These programming features were found to be a simple function that the current facilitator can implement on site with no cost to the County. These changes in policies and procedures could result in significant savings for the County.

**Response:** Requires further analysis. Again, the software must be reviewed to determine if the capability exists to implement the recommendation. Review to take place this fiscal year.

**Finding 6:** No policy exists that specifies when deputies start and stop work when a deputy lives outside of the County.

**Response:** Agree.

**Recommendation 6:** Requires further analysis. Policy will be reviewed by March 2011.

**Response:** Will be implemented when deemed appropriate based upon needs of the department.

**Finding 7:** At this time no policy exists which specifies how far away from the Sheriff's Department the Sheriff or deputies can live.

**Response:** Agree.

**Recommendation 7:** There are currently no remotely stationed deputies, and current policy allows that work starts from the location of the deputy's home. When hiring deputies in the future, the County should consider where the prospective deputy lives or would live in order to be effectively responsive to the community.

**Response:** Requires further analysis. Establishing residency requirements for deputies would require review of labor contracts and other documents and could impact how the Sheriff allocates staffing. Review of necessary documents will take place this fiscal year.