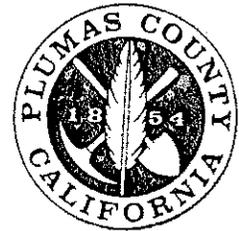


# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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TERRY SWOFFORD, DISTRICT 1  
ROBERT A. MEACHER, DISTRICT 2  
SHERRIE THRALL, DISTRICT 3  
LORI SIMPSON, DISTRICT 4  
OLE OLSEN, DISTRICT 5



December 1, 2009

The Honorable Ira Kaufman  
Judge of the Superior Court  
520 Main Street, Room 104  
Quincy, CA 95971

## RESPONSE TO 2008/2009 GRAND JURY REPORT

Dear Judge Kaufman:

Please find our response to the 2008/2009 Grand Jury Final Report. Included as Attachments 1 and 2, are the responses from Plumas County Public Health Agency and Plumas County Probation Department.

### FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Board of Supervisors

***Finding 1:*** Each member of the Board of Supervisors expressed in one manner or another, their interest in having an open and more transparent relationship with their constituency. The Grand Jury discussed the mechanics of how the Board members could provide that accessibility and transparency.

**Response -** The members of the Board of Supervisors agree with the goal of having an open and transparent relationship with their constituents.

***Recommendation 1:*** The Grand Jury recommends the Board take the following steps in order to accomplish that accessibility: publish a weekly notice in the newspaper that includes the Clerk of the Board's and their own telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and business hours. In addition, we highly recommend they conduct quarterly town hall style meetings, with time, place and agenda published in the newspaper.

**Response-** The Board agrees to request that the newspaper publish their contact information as they currently do with other legislative representatives. The Board agrees that town hall meetings are useful, however they seem to be best attended when there is an issue of great public interest. Therefore, the Board feels that it is best to allow each Supervisor to determine when to call such meetings in his or her District.

***Finding 2:*** Although the California Association of County Governments states that "The Board oversees most of the county departments and programs...." we found not all Supervisors were familiar with the heads of the departments under their supervision.

**Response -** The Supervisors are familiar with heads of Departments directly through appearances at Board meetings, performance evaluations and, indirectly, through the County Administrative Officer.

***Recommendation 2:*** The Grand Jury recommends quarterly meetings (following Brown Act protocol) be held between the Board of Supervisors and the heads of all departments to discuss personnel issues, department needs, budget requirements, etc.

**Response -** The Brown Act prohibits public discussion of personnel issues and would require individual closed sessions with each department head. Any public meeting of all department heads might be legally possible in a workshop setting but this would prevent any action on the Board's part and would probably inhibit the candor required for good information exchange and, therefore, the Board believes that such meetings are not a feasible option.

### **Jail Advisory Committee**

***Finding 1:*** Not all of the Supervisors have toured the jail in recent years.

**Response-** This is true.

***Recommendation 1:*** We recommend each Supervisor tour the jail on at least an annual basis to keep them apprised of the conditions there.

**Response-** The Board recommends that Supervisors make visits to the jail to stay informed on current conditions.

***Finding 2:*** The jail is in very poor structural condition. Due to its outdated floor plan, poor radio communication in some areas, and other serious concerns, it is unsafe for officers and inmates alike. In addition, the jail itself, as well as the maximum security exercise yard, abut the public road into the transfer facility - a road used by families of our community.

**Response-** The Plumas County Jail is regularly inspected by the State Department of Corrections to assure compliance with all State regulations designed to insure inmate, community and officer safety. Only jails that meet these standards are allowed to operate. The Board has sought and will continue to aggressively seek funding for an improved or new jail but can make no commitment as to when improvements could be funded.

***Recommendation 2:*** The Board of Supervisors were in agreement with the Grand Jury's suggestion to appoint a "new jail" advisory committee from the citizenry. The Grand Jury

recommends that this committee be formed within the next three months.

**Response-** The Board created the Corrections Planning Committee in April 2007 to work on law enforcement needs such as the jail. Since this committee has not been active the Board directs that it meet within three months to address the issues raised by the Grand Jury regarding the jail.

### Courthouse Annex

**Finding 1:** The Courthouse Annex was built to replace an old building and was intended to house county, state and federal agencies. The county owns a number of buildings, three airports and several parks.

**Response-** The Annex was designed primarily to house county agencies but the finding is otherwise accurate.

**Recommendation 1:** We recommend that in the future, the Board of Supervisors diligently pursue retrofitting or otherwise making the existing buildings usable, or selling those properties, before taking on new construction.

**Response-** The Board did analyze possible retrofitting which was not feasible. It is not possible to sell an older building housing county employees before constructing a new one without adding the cost of temporary quarters. The Board has no immediate plans for additional construction and feels that the comments in this recommendation are well taken.

**Finding 2:** The mortgage payment for the Courthouse Annex is due at the time that the county has the lowest cash flow in the General Fund, making it difficult to make payments and payroll.

**Response-** This is true.

**Recommendation 2:** The Grand Jury recommends that the county pursue avenues to restructure the mortgage payments.

**Response-** The County has been unable, despite serious efforts, to arrange a restructuring of the payments in these uniquely challenging economic times.

**Finding 3:** The geothermal heating system does not work properly. The three contractors responsible for the system are no longer in business. Facilities personnel are working to correct the problems.

**Response-** True.

**Recommendation 3:** The Board should consult experts in this field to help the county correct the problems.

**Response-** Engineers have designed a practical fix for the poor heating in certain parts of the building which is expected to be fully functional before winter.

**Finding 4:** Some effort is currently underway to locate new permanent tenants for the Annex.

**Response-** True

**Recommendation 4:** We recommend that the county actively pursue other tenants by advertising both inside and outside the county, subsidizing the rents, and moving other county departments into the building.

**Response-** The Annex was designed to provide office space for governmental agencies and is not well suited to other uses. The County is negotiating with other agencies to rent space. Rent is negotiated and therefore there is no need to talk of subsidies. Moving other departments into the building does not appear practical as it would be unlikely to produce more rentable space and there are no likely candidates.

**Finding 5:** It is our understanding that no efforts have been made to use the building for temporary events.

**Response-** This is true but the building is not well suited for such uses, being primarily office space with many confidential files.

**Recommendation 5:** As permanent tenants are being located, the Grand Jury recommends that this beautiful building be used by the citizenry for a multitude of purposes, and that the Board actively publicize the availability of the space for community use.

**Response-** This recommendation is not feasible in a building that consists of office space with many confidential files.

### **Alcohol and Drug Program**

**With all due respect to the Grand Jury and the public, because of pending litigation and claims by or on behalf of former Alcohol and Drug employees that involve the closing of the department, on advice of County Counsel and in part in reliance on the Supervisor's deliberative privilege, the Board will make no comment on these findings and recommendations.**

**Finding 1:** The biggest complaint we encountered was that the Board of Supervisors was not forthcoming in communicating the rationale for closing the program and the details of the state taking over.

**Recommendation 1:** We urge the Board as we go forward in these difficult economic times to

Keep the public informed to the fullest extent possible regarding decisions like this in order to minimize the uncertainties and fears of those affected.

**Finding 2:** Difficult as the decision was to allow the Alcohol and Drug Program to revert to the state, the economics of continuing to operate it was determined by the Board to be financially unsupportable by the county.

**Recommendation 2:** This Grand Jury feels that the Board of Supervisors acted prudently and wisely in turning this program back to the state.

### **Litigation**

**Finding 1:** The Grand Jury found that department-specific policies and procedures did not exist. Department-specific policies and procedures would help resolve many issues, and the Grand Jury did not find any for those departments we reviewed.

**Response-** Many departments have their own policies and procedures as to many issues dealt with by that specific department in addition to countywide policies.

**Recommendation 1:** The Grand Jury recommends that each department develop a policies and procedures manual with the guidance and expertise of the human resources department. Further, we recommend that the manual be required annual reading for managers, supervisors, and employees to ensure understanding of the rules.

**Response-** The County is hoping to provide full and complete county policies and procedure on line but cannot provide a completion date for this project. Once these are available the individual departments can develop consistent departmental policies and procedures consistent with countywide policies and procedures to deal with the particular needs of that department.

**Finding 2:** The most recent job description we could find was dated 2005. Most were updated in the mid to late 1990s.

**Response-** Although there may be job descriptions that are 10 years old or more the real question is whether the job has changed. For instance, buying a new truck does not change the job description of the driver.

**Recommendation 2:** In order to hold employees accountable for their work, we recommend that accurate and timely job descriptions should be immediately developed for every level of county employee.

**Response-** The County does not have the resources to rewrite all of its job descriptions and there is no need to do so since a job description sets the nature of the job and the precise employee

Responsibilities are assigned by the department head within those limits. If there are job descriptions that no longer accurately reflect the nature of an employee's work, these will be considered on a case by case basis.

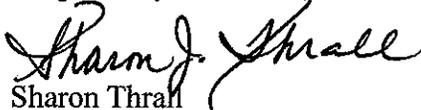
**Finding 3:** Noted in the 2008-2009 Plumas County Budget, one of last year's accomplishments of the Risk Management Department was to "...provide specialized focused training within the department to lessen risk exposure, i.e., Supervisors Training, Team Building, Conflict Resolution...."

**Response-** True

**Recommendation 3:** The Grand Jury recommends that similar training and additional job-specific training be mandatory for all county employees.

**Response-** The County has applied to join Trindel Insurance Fund, a cooperative of nine small rural counties which has a strong safety and loss prevention program to be monitored by a local Safety/Loss Prevention Officer. The Board will utilize these resources to improve safe and effective department operations.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Thrall

Chair, Plumas County Board of Supervisors



# Plumas County Public Health Agency

270 County Hospital Road, Quincy, California 95971

Mimi Hall, MPH, CHES, Director

- Administration & Health Education  
Suite 206  
Quincy, CA 95971  
(530) 283-6337  
(530) 283-6425 Fax
- Clinic & Nursing Services  
Suite 111  
Quincy, CA 95971  
(530) 283-6330  
(530) 283-6110 Fax
- Senior Nutrition & Transportation  
Suite 206  
Quincy, CA 95971  
(530) 283-3546  
(530) 283-6425 Fax
- Environmental Health  
Quincy Office  
Suite 127  
Quincy, CA 95971  
(530) 283-6355  
(530) 283-6241 Fax
- Environmental Health - Chester  
222 First Avenue  
Post Office Box 1194  
Chester, CA 96020  
(530) 258-2536  
(530) 258-2844 Fax

Date: September 14, 2009

To: Liz Cortez, Paralegal/Office Manager

From: Mimi Hall, Public Health Director 

CC: Jack Ingstad, CAO  
James Reichle, County Counsel  
Plumas County Board of Supervisors  
Martha Heeszal, Senior Services Division Director

Re: Response to 2008/2009 Grand Jury Final Report

**RECEIVED**  
SEP 16 2009  
PLUMAS COUNTY  
COUNTY COUNSEL

This memo serves as a response to the 2008-2009 Grand Jury Final Report findings and recommendations regarding the Plumas County Public Health Agency Senior Nutrition Program. Listed below are the eight Findings and Recommendations reported by the Grand Jury and the subsequent responses from Plumas County Public Health Agency.

**Advertising**

- Finding:** The Senior Nutrition menu is printed in the local newspapers.*
- Recommendation 1:** To ensure all senior community members are kept informed, we recommend that flyers or other visible reminders of the program be posted in places such as libraries, churches, medical/dental offices, post offices, etc.*
- Response:** Flyers and Senior Newsletters have been placed in the suggested locations. The Senior Services Division Director is updating program brochures with updated program information.*
- Recommendation 2:** We recommend an Open House, Bring a Friend to Lunch Day, or other organized activities to introduce seniors to this great program. Advisory Board funds, as well as community business and private donations could potentially be used to support these activities.*
- Response:** These activities are good suggestions to increase utilization of the program. The grant funding for the Senior Nutrition Program provides a reimbursement for a set target number of meals served. The county general fund contributes additional dollars to SNP, because each year, what is received in grant funding and donations does not cover the cost of the program. In addition, each meal costs significantly more than the suggested senior and even non-senior donation per meal. Therefore, increasing participation in the program will result in a net deficit for the program budget. The SNP staff will continue to work with each Advisory Board, Commission on Aging, and other community partners to insure SNP outreach and referral so that seniors most in need of our services will be reached.*

**ATTACHMENT 1**

### **Donations**

**Finding:** Donation boxes were not always placed in an area that was confidential. One was placed where the Site Manager had full view of the box; others were located at the sign-in table. The donation boxes were not fully screened.

**Recommendation:** We recommend the donation boxes be moved to a more secure, private area out of view.

**Response:** *The SNP acknowledges the need for an area for guests to make donations to the program in a manner that is confidential. With the need have the donation box in a location visible to staff, yet still completely private for the guest, we have been challenged on finding the perfect balance between security and privacy for a couple of our sites with limited space. We continue to use a screened area and work with staff to maintain confidentiality for our guests.*

### **Job Descriptions**

**Finding:** Pertinent job descriptions dated as far back as the mid-1990's and may not reflect current job responsibilities.

**Recommendation:** We recommend these be updated as necessary and reviewed annually.

**Response:** *Job Descriptions for SNP Assistant Cook and Head Cook were last revised and adopted in August, 2002. Job Descriptions for Senior Services Division Director and Site Manager were last adopted in 1999. All job descriptions are posted on the County of Plumas website and also available at the Plumas County Human Resources Department. Plumas County Public Health Agency will review job descriptions annually. With the SNP program operating in a similar manner for the last several years, the job descriptions adopted in August 2002 for Assistant and Head Cook adequately reflect current scope of job responsibilities. Job Descriptions for Senior Services Division Director and Site Manager will be reviewed in 2009-2010 and revised as needed.*

### **Policies and Procedures**

**Finding:** Our interviews revealed that there is no policies and procedures manual for nutrition centers. This has led to inconsistencies among sites.

**Recommendations:** We strongly recommend that a written manual specific to the needs of the Plumas County senior nutrition sites be developed by the end of this calendar year. This manual should include but not be limited to: Food preparation and distribution, accounting procedures, special events, complaint process, employee conduct.

**Response:** *The SNP works under the Policies and Procedures for program operations from its funder, the Area Agency on Aging, as well as the County Personnel Rules. We will develop a set of guidelines specific to nutrition site operations that will include the topics suggested by the grand jury to be reviewed by all staff at least annually and by all new staff upon employment. We believe this will assist greatly in daily operations.*

### **Senior Nutrition Surveys**

**Finding:** An annual survey is conducted to assess the seniors' interests and satisfaction with the program.

**Recommendation:** We recommend two surveys per year to address seasonal attendance fluctuations. We also recommend that the survey be expanded to include suggestions for activities.

**Response:** *Surveys are usually collected in February of each year. They are now being done in February and August in order to get input from summer guests.*

### **Site Managers**

**Finding:** We found the site managers are very "hands on" in their approach to their jobs. They go the extra mile to invest their time, energy, empathy and concern in the seniors they serve.

**Recommendation:** Keep up the good work!

**Response:** *PCPHA and SNP will continue to support and acknowledge Site Managers for a job well done. The Senior Services Division Director, Martha Heeszal, should also be acknowledged for her commitment to the program, her staff and all of the community members served through her programs.*



RECEIVED  
SEP 14 2009

PLUMAS COUNTY  
COUNTY COUNSEL

Sharon L. Reinert, Chief Probation Officer

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Plumas County Probation Department-1446 E. Main Street, Quincy, CA 95971 (530) 283-6200

Date: September 11, 2009

To: Honorable Ira Kaufman, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Sharon Reinert 

Re: Response to 2008-2009 Grand Jury Report

Grand Jury's Finding #2 – Probation Department

"The Probation Officers have an extremely heavy and growing workload. Adequate supervision of adult and juvenile offenders is critical to the safety of the citizens of Plumas County and decreases the number of probationers re-offending."

Grand Jury's Recommendation to Finding #2

"The County Board of Supervisors needs to fund one additional full-time Probation Officer to meet the workload required to supervise adult and juvenile offenders."

CPO Response to Finding and Recommendation #2

Agreed. The Probation Department is understaffed, and currently there are five Probation Officers carrying the supervision caseload for the entire County. Three of those officers are in the Adult Division (although we recently received the resignation of one of those officers, effective September 21, 2009); one supervises a specialized caseload, and the other two adult officers are responsible for the supervision of the remaining 244 adult probationers. Two of the officers supervise the Juvenile Division, one of which is the Placement Officer, requiring the remaining juvenile Probation Officer to supervise juveniles on probation or who have had contact with law enforcement countywide. Of course, both scenarios jeopardize public safety and effect the rate of recidivism.

However, at this time, given the current state of the budget and potential layoffs, allocating another full-time position supported by the General Fund does not appear to be feasible. Hopefully, once the economy recovers and the County is in a better financial state, consideration of the allocation of another Probation Officer would be given at that time. Presently, the hope is to receive approval to fill the impending vacant Probation Officer position.

**ATTACHMENT 2**