



# COUNTY OF VENTURA

# AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

## Employee Fraud Hotline Report ... Update #7 For the Period July through December 2004

Three ways to contact the Hotline:

**Call:**  
(805) 644-6019



**Write:**  
Employee Fraud Hotline  
Ventura County Auditor-Controller  
Administration Building L#1540  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**E-Mail\*:**  
Fraud.Hotline@mail.co.ventura.ca.us

\* E-mail is not confidential.

*I am pleased to present the Semi-Annual Report of the Employee Fraud Hotline, which was established as an avenue to report fraud, waste, and abuse occurring at the County of Ventura. I encourage employees to resolve concerns through their normal administrative channels whenever possible. However, the Employee Fraud Hotline provides an alternative reporting mechanism to ensure that concerns about possible wrongdoing in our County government are properly addressed. This report reflects information provided to the Board of Supervisors on January 25, 2005.*

*Christine L. Cohen  
Auditor-Controller*

**Hotline Activity at a Glance . . .** During July through December 2004, the Employee Fraud Hotline received 7 new complaints of improper governmental activities, of which we pursued and resolved 2 (29%) involving payroll and vehicle abuses. We did not pursue five issues because three callers were redirected to other agencies and two issues were closed due to insufficient information.

Most of the seven new callers chose to remain anonymous and identified themselves as either County employees or the Public:

- **Caller Anonymity:**
  - Anonymous 71%
  - Not Anonymous 29%
- **Call Source:**
  - County Employees 29%
  - General Public 29%
  - Unknown 42%

During July through December 2004, we resolved/closed a total of 13 Hotline issues out of the 15 complaints that were under review/open (7 new complaints and 8 prior complaints):

### Summary Outcomes of 13 Hotline Issues Resolved/Closed during July-December 2004

Unsubstantiated . . . . .	5
Substantiated (see description below) . . .	3
Redirected callers to other agencies . . . .	3
Insufficient information . . . . .	2

### DESCRIPTION OF SUBSTANTIATED COMPLAINTS

**Improper Bid Process.** Although not all of the complainant's allegations were substantiated, we did verify that the original intent to award a bid that was subsequently canceled was not appropriate. We also identified other areas for improvement relating to the bids we reviewed, including: documenting the justification for certain actions; responding to bid protests; following proper procedures for selecting other than the lowest bidder; including protest procedures in bids; and documenting requisition approvals. The department initiated corrective action to address our findings.

**Public Assistance Benefits.** Internal control improvements were needed for issuing public assistance benefits, including: segregating duties for vendor payments; strengthening written procedures; limiting check signing authority; and reconciling agency fund accounts monthly. The department initiated corrective action to address our findings.

**Misuse of County Vehicle.** An employee drove a County vehicle in an unsafe manner and in possible violation of traffic laws. The department counseled the employee about the need to drive safely, courteously, and legally while in the course of employment.