

July 16, 2020

Ms. Anida Margolis, Foreperson
Ventura County Grand Jury
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Ms. Margolis:

On behalf of the City of Thousand Oaks and Mayor Al Adam, please find attached the City's response to the Grand Jury report titled "Cybersecurity Strategies for Cities in Ventura County," dated July 7, 2020.

Sincerely,



Raquel Sheppard
Customer Relations Assistant

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Ventura County
Grand Jury

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Cybersecurity Strategies for Cities in Ventura County

Report Date: July 7, 2020

Response By: City Council of the City of Thousand Oaks

Pursuant to California Penal Code Sections 933.05 (a) and (b), the City Council of the City of Thousand Oaks provides the following responses to the findings and recommendations included in the above-referenced Grand Jury Report.

BACKGROUND

The Ventura County Grand Jury investigated the cybersecurity strategies of the 10 incorporated cities (Cities) of Ventura County. The review was initiated as recent national and local news reported cities falling victim to hacking attacks with increasing frequency. Often attackers used malware to block access to a city's computer systems and demanded payment to unblock them.

The Grand Jury assessed how prepared each City was to defend against data breaches and ransomware and identified opportunities to implement improvements. The Grand Jury was mindful not to disclose vulnerabilities or otherwise increase the potential for an attack on an information technology system of a City. The Grand Jury recognized that each City had varying circumstances, resources, and readiness and that there is no perfect solution to cybersecurity or defense against cyberattacks.

FORMAT OF RESPONSE

The City Council's detailed response to the Grand Jury Report is set forth in the following pages. The response is ordered in the same manner as the report itself: Facts, Conclusions and Recommendations. The City Council is required to respond to Conclusions 01 - 08 and Recommendations 01 - 10.

RESPONSE TO CONCLUSIONS

C-01. While the Grand Jury recognizes each city is taking steps to implement cybersecurity and to defend against cyberattacks, it concludes there is no perfect solution to cybersecurity or defense against cyberattacks. (FA-01, FA-02, FA-03,

FA-04, FA-05, FA-06, FA-07)

The City agrees with this conclusion.

C-02. The Grand Jury concluded eight cities are currently using suboptimal web addresses for their websites. (FA-08, FA-09)

The City agrees with this conclusion, generally but not as to the City of Thousand Oaks. The .gov domain for the City website would greatly lengthen the url and making it much less convenient: toaks.org vs www.thousandoakscalifornia.gov. This conclusion does not necessarily make the website more secure. The City already uses HTTPS on their websites.

C-03. The Grand Jury concluded generally cities are not utilizing free federal and discounted federally aligned resources available to cities, to bolster their cybersecurity defenses. (FA-10, FA-11, FA-12, FA-13, FA-14, FA-15, FA-16, FA-17, FA-18, FA-19, FA-20)

The City disagrees with this conclusion. The City is taking advantage of many of the federal aligned resources offerings.

C-04. The Grand Jury concluded cybersecurity staffing could be improved with more effective recruiting and staff retention practices. (FA-21, FA-22, FA-23)

The City disagrees with this conclusion as being inapplicable to the City of Thousand Oaks. The City currently employs two interns/hourly employees from Cal Lutheran University and Moorpark College. The City also employs a full-time staff member dedicated to cybersecurity and network infrastructure. The City has not had issues recruiting and/or retaining IT staff.

C-05. The Grand Jury concluded cities should manage cyber risks associated with vendors by requiring they provide annual documentation regarding cybersecurity insurance and cybersecurity practices. (FA-24, FA-25, FA-30, FA-31)

The City agrees with this conclusion. The City already requires cybersecurity insurance for their information technology vendors.

C-06. The Grand Jury concluded some cities do not clearly identify expenditures regarding information technology or cybersecurity in their budgets. (FA-26, FA-27)

The City agrees generally, however does not have intimate knowledge of other cities' decisions regarding information technology or cybersecurity expenditures. The City currently identifies information technology expenditures but not cybersecurity specifically as cybersecurity expenditures are included within the overall information technology budget.



C-07. The Grand Jury concluded all cities would benefit from comprehensive cyber incident response, recovery and business continuity plans. (FA-28, FA-29)

The City agrees with this conclusion. The City is in the process of formalizing their cyber incident response. Recovery and business continuity plans are in place but need additional documentation.

C-08. The Grand Jury concluded some cities are not following the recommended best practices for teleworking published by California Cyber Security Integration Center (FA-03, FA-04)

City staff believes this is not applicable to the City as it already recommends and trains staff to follow the best practice guidelines.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

R-01. The Grand Jury recommends cities establish secure web addresses through the use of HTTPS or other such protocols. (C-02)

This recommendation has already been implemented.

R-02. The Grand Jury recommends cities establish trustworthy web addresses by following the California Department of Technology domain name taxonomy guidance. (C-02)

As stated above, the City agrees with this conclusion in a general sense. The City will not be implementing this recommendation as the .gov domain for the City website would greatly lengthen the url and make it much less convenient: toaks.org vs www.city_ofthousandoaksca.gov. This recommendation does not necessarily make the website itself more secure.

R-03. The Grand Jury recommends cities utilize free federal and federally aligned cybersecurity services as set forth in Appendix 02 to supplement internal staff and/or replace vendor services whenever possible. (C-03)

Staff agrees. Staff already utilizes several of the resources and is exploring additional services not currently used.

R-04. The Grand Jury recommends cities' IT staff subscribe to CISA updates online. (C-03)

This recommendation has already been implemented. Staff currently receive the CISA updates.



R-05. The Grand Jury recommends cities take advantage of discounted services and cooperative purchasing programs whenever possible. (C-03)

This recommendation has already been implemented. Staff have been taking advantage of these services but will review for additional opportunities.

R-06. The Grand Jury recommends cities develop personnel cost-saving opportunities and create a cybersecurity talent pool by recruiting interns or graduating students using: (C-04)

- The Scholarships for Service program described in Appendix 02
- Local education institutions (high school, community college, private college and state university)

This recommendation has already been implemented. The City has already taken advantage of these cost-savings by hiring an intern/hourly from California Lutheran University and Moorpark College and plan on continuing this practice.

R-07. The Grand Jury recommends cities maintain good vendor management by: (C-03, C-05)

- Obtaining CISA assistance to conduct risk management assessments on all third-party vendors that have access to any confidential data or that interact with city networks and systems
- Requiring all vendors provide cybersecurity documentation. As part of their ongoing third-party due diligence, cities should evaluate vendors for compliance and risk on an annual basis
- Requiring IT vendors obtain cybersecurity insurance.

This recommendation has already been implemented. The City will explore CISA assistance in risk management of their vendors and begin reviewing on an annual basis. The City currently requires cybersecurity insurance from their IT vendors.

R-08. The Grand Jury recommends cities clearly identify expenses for their Information Services (Technology) Departments in their approved budgets. (C-06)

This recommendation has already been implemented. The City currently identifies all IT expenditures separately in its adopted budget.

R-09. The Grand Jury recommends cities develop and test cyber incident response, recovery and business continuity plans. (C-07)

This recommendation will be implemented in the near future. This response is currently in the planning and development stages. Recovery is currently tested on a regular and on-going basis.

R-10. The Grand Jury recommends cities implement the best practices for



teleworking as published by the California Cyber Security Integration Center. (C-08)

This recommendation will be implemented going forward. The City will make the best practices teleworking recommendations document available to all City staff.

R-11. The Grand Jury recommends cities develop a written plan for implementation of R-01 through R-10 prior to December 31, 2020

Staff agrees. The City will begin working on a written plan to comply with the December 31, 2020 date. The City has made cybersecurity an increased focus over the past two years. The City requires all staff to attend cybersecurity training when hired and then every two years thereafter. IT staff regularly test City staff on the latest phishing and ransomware e-mails. IT staff attend annual cybersecurity conferences, various webinars, hold monthly meetings, and vendor demos on the latest trends and applications in cybersecurity.

SUMMARY

The City of Thousand Oaks wishes to thank the Grand Jury for its review of current practices related to public access to the City's Conflict of Interest Code. The City Council appreciates and welcomes the efforts of the Grand Jury in their review of City practices.

Date: July 7, 2020 Signed: 
Al Adam, Mayor
City of Thousand Oaks

Number of pages attached: 0

