

county of ventura

COUNTY OF VENTURA CAO
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August 8, 1996

TO: Lin Koester, Chief Administrative Office, L# 1940

FROM: Peter S. Pedroff, Director, L# 1000 *PEP*

SUBJECT: GRAND JURY RESPONSE

The following information has been compiled in response to the recommendations contained in the 1995/96 Grand Jury report. Please contact me at 654-3800 if you have questions regarding these responses.

PARKS DEPARTMENT

NEW PARKS DEPARTMENT

RECOMMENDATION #1 - The Parks Department provide an annual Guide to Beaches and Parks, including rates and a map, early in each calendar year. Circulation of the brochure should include the County Fair Booth, Chambers of Commerce, motels, and hotels plus magazines and other media venues. Map providers such as the Automobile Club of Southern California need continuing updates.

RESPONSE - The Parks Department does print a Guide to Beaches and Parks that includes a map of the location of all County parks. We do not print the rates because they are subject to change (i.e. winter camping discounts). We distribute approximately 10,000 Guides annually through a variety of sources including the County Fair and local Chambers of Commerce. We will include the Automobile Club in the future. Our campgrounds are also listed in numerous camping guides that are published and distributed throughout the West. Also, we have made the Guide available to Internet users through the Ventura County Government web site.

RECOMMENDATION #2 - The Parks Department increase public awareness of each County park with upgraded on-site signs, current information, and media promotion.



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RESPONSE - The Parks Department is currently working on a design for standardized park entrance signs. Once the design is chosen, it will be necessary to secure funding to construct these new park entrance signs. Due to the potential significant cost of the signs, this may have to be phased in over several years. In our heavily visited "day use" parks and campgrounds, we maintain a bulletin board to post current information and park rules. Through press releases, we hope to generate additional media coverage for our recreational facilities.

RECOMMENDATION #3 - The Parks Department reconsider the deletion of office personnel, maintenance workers and a manager, in anticipation of expanded operations and increased usage.

RESPONSE - The Parks Department believes the anticipated expanded operations and increased use can initially be accommodated with seasonal extra-help personnel. If the use of the expanded operations becomes significant, then consideration will be given to hiring full time personnel. We will also evaluate the use of contract maintenance services, if it can be proven to be a cost effective way of providing certain types of maintenance services (i.e. landscape maintenance, custodial services, or repair and construction projects).

RECOMMENDATION #4 - The Board of Supervisors establish a target date for the Parks Advisory and the Harbor Advisory Commission to take effect.

RESPONSE - The Board determined that the Parks and Harbor Commission should continue as a joint commission to evaluate the subsidy transition between the harbor and the parks. The Board will reevaluate the issue in April 1997 and then make the decision to either continue the joint commission or create two separate commissions.

KENNEY GROVE PARK

RECOMMENDATION #1 - Improve the clarity and give a message of welcome on signs at the entry.

RESPONSE - Staff will meet with the lessees of Kenney Grove Park to review each of their signs to determine whether revisions should be made.

RECOMMENDATION #2 - Identify Kenney Grove as a Ventura County Park.

RESPONSE - When the entry area sign is repainted, we will require the lessee to identify the park as a Ventura County Park.

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RECOMMENDATION #3 - Delete mention of "private" and "owner" from signs and brochures.

RESPONSE - Lessee will be requested to replace these words with "lessee" and "operator".

RECOMMENDATION #4 - Include basic hours and rates in brochures.

RESPONSE - This recommendation will be requested of the lessees.

STECKEL PARK

RECOMMENDATION #1 - Make new signs for aviary a priority project.

RESPONSE - Staff will seek funding to complete this project, perhaps with the assistance of community groups.

RECOMMENDATION #2 - Direct the Lessee to use a promotional map which locates Steckel Park and possibly other County Parks.

RESPONSE - Staff will meet with lessee regarding this matter. Lessee currently has a map that is sent to the news media and camping groups regarding the facilities they operate.

RECOMMENDATION #3 - Urge the Lessee to make campsite cleanups more frequent, as recommended by the 1994/1995 Grand Jury.

RESPONSE - Our observation is that the lessee keeps the campsites in good condition. However, staff will discuss this matter with the lessee.

RECOMMENDATION #4 - Actively seek resolution of road concerns with Public Works. Posting speed limit signs with regular enforcement may be the best way to control speeding vehicles.

RESPONSE - Staff will meet with the Public Works Agency - Road Department and the Sheriff's Department to discuss the best ways of controlling speeds in the campground area.

PURCHASING SERVICES

PURCHASE ORDER CHECKS

RECOMMENDATION # 1 -Vendors should never have the authority to fill in the amount of a County generated POC or any check.

RESPONSE - Vendors are allowed to fill in the amount on POCs, in specific situations, through a procedure established more than 35 years ago. The risk is low

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since POCs are limited to \$600, and a written explanation is required from the department when a blank POC is cashed for \$20 over the expected amount. Blank POCs for lodging are usually hand-carried by the employee because the sales and bed tax amounts vary from city to city. Blank checks can also be issued for items with prices that change often or for the repair of equipment. In some cases blank POCs are sent to out-of-state vendors who may, or may not, collect California State sales tax, or when the shipping charge is not known. We are not aware of any problem caused by this practice.

RECOMMENDATION # 2 - Department trust accounts should be established for unplanned/emergency purchases, and one time purchases under \$600. The accounts should be maintained by each department and monitored by the County Controller's office. A "Request for Payment" (RFP) should be prepared by individual departments and audited by the County Controller's office to replenish their trust account.

RESPONSE - We do not agree that trust accounts are a more efficient method of handling unplanned/emergency purchases, and purchases less than \$600. The POC process was modeled after procedures used in private industry to expedite the procurement process and reduce administrative costs associated with small purchases. To further streamline the procurement process and eventually replace POCs, the Auditor-Controller's Office and GSA Purchasing Services are currently working together to introduce a procurement credit card system for these types of purchases.

RECOMMENDATION # 3 - Establish a written procedure for emergency purchases to prevent unauthorized purchases. Purchases should not be made without a valid purchase order number, sub-purchase order number or cash transaction number (trust account purchase). The receiving employees who receive the purchased merchandise should show identification (in cases where purchases are picked up at the vendors), print their full name, identification number (employee or social security number), receiving date and their signature on the receiving document.

RESPONSE - Written procedures for emergency purchases are established and can be found in the Purchasing Ordinance, department training manual, purchasing procedure manual, and instructions sent to vendors. Purchasing Ordinance #4084, Section 4, Emergency Purchases states, "Emergency purchases may be made by any person or official authorized to sign requisitions when the Purchasing Agent or any of his/her assistants in the Purchasing department authorized to make purchases is not immediately available and the item or items so purchased are immediately necessary for the continued operation of the office or department involved, or are immediately necessary for the preservation of life or property. Such emergency purchases shall be subsequently approved and confirmed by the Purchasing Agent, or if he/she refuses

such confirmation, the Board of Supervisors may subsequently approve and confirm such purchase by a four-fifths vote of the members present at any of its regular meetings. Unless such purchases are so approved and confirmed by either the Purchasing Agent or the Board of Supervisors, the cost thereof shall not constitute a legal charge against the County.”

For the purchase of goods on a walk-in basis, vendors are provided with instructions to record the employee name, signature of the individual receiving the goods, County badge number, and driver’s license number. Departments complete an Emergency Justification Form describing the nature of the emergency and justification for the purchase to be returned to Purchasing within three working days. The purchase is then reviewed by Purchasing and approved or denied.

RECOMMENDATION # 4 - Department personnel should have access at all times to a person who is authorized to dispense purchase order numbers or trust account checks.

RESPONSE - See above recommendation number 3 for established emergency procurement procedures.

RECOMMENDATION # 5 -POCs should be locked up until they are to be generated.

RESPONSE - POCs are locked in a cabinet except during the printing process. The cabinet is behind a security barrier in a work station that is not accessible to the public or to non-Purchasing employees.

RECOMMENDATION # 6 - A security procedure must be established to protect against fraudulent use of the procurement cards when they become available.

RESPONSE - The proposed procurement card security procedures are modeled after those proposed by the bank card processor and in use by both government and corporate accounts throughout the country. The cardholder must keep a log of all purchases and his or her supervisor must approve all purchases. The supervisor and the Auditor’s Accounts Payable office receive copies of the invoice under separate mailing. Any unauthorized purchases will not be processed for payment but placed in dispute until resolved.

RECOMMENDATION # 7 - A regular financial audit should be performed monthly on the POC account as long as this procedure is being used.

RESPONSE - The POC account is audited weekly with a bank statement and reconciled by GSA Central Accounting to an internal register. Also, on a weekly

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basis, the Auditor's Accounts Payable office reviews all POCs for appropriateness and balances the account before making a deposit.

JOB ORDER CONTRACTING (JOC)

RECOMMENDATION # 1 - Every effort should be made to keep Ventura County taxpayer's money working for citizens and businesses in this County.

RESPONSE - One of GSA Purchasing Services' goals is to give local firms an opportunity to do business with the County. We are an active participant in the annual Ventura County Business Opportunity Fair and have also given presentations to numerous business and professional organizations to explain how to do business with the County. In addition, contract awards are made to local vendors in the event of a tie bid.

RECOMMENDATION # 2 - The County should require that GSA deal directly with the Responsible Managing Employee (RME) or the General Contractor should be able to provide documented proof regarding the RME(s) compliance with the laws of the State of California.

RESPONSE - The Contractors State Licensing Board (CSLB) is the regulating agency responsible for licensing requirements and compliance. We requested that CSLB review the RME issue and they determined that the general contractor's license was current and valid. Also, we have a letter from the general contractor stating that they are in full compliance with all requirements.

RECOMMENDATION # 3 - The County should request the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) to verify the payroll and Workers' Compensation records of the out-of-state General Contractor to make sure they are in compliance with the laws of the State of California.

RESPONSE - The general contractor provided proof of Worker's Compensation insurance and posts wage rates as required by law. We see no reason to refer the matter to the State.

RECOMMENDATION # 4 - When the contract is considered for renewal, a clause should be included that would require a greater percentage of the JOC's business in Ventura County be given to local companies. If it is not possible for the JOC to contract with a local company, it should be approved by Purchasing prior to contracting with an outside vendor.

RESPONSE - This recommendation will be given full consideration when the contract is considered for renewal. Of the 12 projects initiated to date, 11 were subcontracted to local businesses; 4 in Ventura, 1 in Ojai, 1 in Oxnard, 2 in

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Camarillo, 1 in Thousand Oaks, 1 in Westlake Village, and 1 in Simi Valley. Only one project was subcontracted to an out-of-county business located in Long Beach.

RECOMMENDATION # 5 - The out-of-state General Contractors should be required to advertise locally to inform local vendors and suppliers of their procedure and how they can have the opportunity to obtain business from the County through the General Contractor.

RESPONSE - We sent notices to six local plan services, used in the past to advertise jobs, that we now have a general contractor. Purchasing Services continues to maintain its contractor data base and as inquiries come to us, new vendors are added to the data base. The general contractor is periodically provided with an updated local contractor listing. The general contractor has agreed to be an exhibitor at the 2nd Annual Ventura County Business Opportunity Fair on September 18, 1996 at Seaside Park. This will provide the opportunity for local firms to learn how to do business with the County under the new system.

PSP/RA/me