

W.D.



Hall of Administration
Lower Plaza
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

THE COUNTY
CLERK AND RECORDER:
County Clerk
of Supervisors
for Voters
Recorder

RICHARD D. DEAN
COUNTY CLERK AND RECORDER

December 2, 1998

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DEC 04 1998

[Handwritten signature]

The Honorable Charles W. Campbell, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Ventura County Superior Court
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: Response to the 1998-99 Grand Jury Report Titled: *Cable TV Public Access & Televising of Public Meetings*

Dear Judge Campbell:

Attached is a response to the 1998-99 Grand Jury First Report submitted pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05.

I want to thank the Grand Jury for their time, interest and efforts to enhance citizen access to local government.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Dean

Richard D. Dean
County Clerk and Recorder

RDD:rdd

Attachment

c: M.L. Koester, Chief Administrative Officer
Grand Jury

Cable TV Public Access & Televising of Public Meetings

Recommendation

3. "... for the same purpose of more openness in government affairs, the Board should be encouraged to have its agendas published in local newspapers."

Response

We cannot concur with this recommendation for several reasons:

1. The annual cost of publishing the Board of Supervisors weekly agenda in a daily newspaper would be an estimated \$28,000 per year. Publication would occur after the Board meeting because the earliest publication day for a legal notice submitted Thursday evening is the following Wednesday. The weekly newspapers would have the same problem because they are published on Thursday with deadlines of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and the semiweekly papers have deadlines of Friday and Monday for the Wednesday edition and Wednesday for the Friday edition.

2. News outlets throughout the county, including 29 newspapers, radio, and television stations, receive the agenda. The media generally does a good job publishing those items on the agenda which are of public interest.

3. Copies are sent to each city. In addition, over 25 individual, community, and special interest groups receive copies including the League of Women Voters, Environmental Defense Center, Channel Islands Harbor Marketing, Healthcare Association of Southern California, Mountains Recreation and Conservancy Authority, Western States Petroleum Association, Building Industry Association of Southern California, etc.

4. Sixteen copies of the agenda are also sent to Foster library for distribution to the other county libraries. We also post the agenda on the internet at www.ventura.org/recorder/venclrk.htm each Thursday.

5. In our opinion, newspaper legal notices are not an effective means of communicating with those who need to know. A few decades ago most people read the newspaper; it was, for practical purposes, the only source of information. In today's electronic age many people get their news from other sources such as radio, television, real time satellite communications, and the internet. Various laws requiring publication of legal notices remain on the books because the newspaper lobby fights repeal of such laws (an example is S.B. 1684 authored by Senator Kopp in 1996). In our view, the millions of tax dollars spent each year on legal notices are little more than a generous local government subsidy for California's newspaper industry.