

# county of ventura

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VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

J. MATTHEW CARROLL  
Chief Information Officer

JUN 12 2003



## INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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PRESIDING JUDGE Assistant Chief Information Officer

M. Lowry Gilbert

June 11, 2003

Honorable Bruce A. Clark  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 S. Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: ISD Response to 2002-2003 Ventura County Grand Jury Report  
entitled *Police Information Systems Within Ventura County*

As requested in a letter of March 18, 2003 directed to me by the 2002-2003 Ventura Grand Jury Foreman Duane Christensen, the following responses are provided in answer to their Findings and Recommendations contained within the Grand Jury's report entitled *Police Information Systems Within Ventura County* (a copy of which is attached).

### Grand Jury Findings

F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4, F-5, F-6, F-7, F-8, F-9

The County Chief Information Officer (CIO) concurs with each of the referenced Findings in the Grand Jury's report.

### Grand Jury Recommendations

R-1. The Sheriff and Police Chiefs charter a working group composed of crime analysts, sworn officers (from gang and street crime task forces) and technical specialists to identify the conceptual design of a data warehouse for Countywide police information. (C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4).

### County Chief Information Officer (CIO) Response

The County CIO concurs that a cooperatively developed data warehouse may be the best mechanism for sharing of information among law enforcement agencies. The Information Systems Department (ISD) is available to participate upon the Sheriff and local Police Chiefs' chartering such a project.

The County CIO further recommends that before the working group and project are chartered, the Sheriff and Police Chiefs meet to define the high-level policies, goals, requirements, and constraints that will apply. Some of the potential discussion issues are outlined below.

RECEIVED  
JUN 16 2003

Re: ISD Response to 2002-2003  
Ventura County Grand Jury Report entitled  
*Police Information Systems Within Ventura County*

In the existing VCIJIS environment, information and capabilities available to County agencies are generally available to local police, as well. Local police data is not available. Sharing of "early" law enforcement data, and ensuring its timely entry and verification, may require alterations in business practices and staffing. In addition, intelligence data is generally guarded and not shared among VCIJIS agencies, or shared only after a certain point in time. This may not be a concern among law enforcement agencies, but perhaps should be clarified for the working group.

An ancillary efficiency concern, previously expressed by police departments, is not addressed by a data warehouse. This involves the ability to automatically transfer data entered into VCIJIS systems to local RMS systems. In many instances, local police currently enter some data twice, for County VCIJIS and for local RMS. Establishment of a common file or other standard format, by which data could be exchanged in both directions, might be needed in addition to a data warehouse. Clarification of the applicability of this possible requirement is needed for the working group.

RMS data transfer would require each RMS vendor to process the file and insert the data into their RMS systems. The data warehouse may be easier to achieve.

For the Sheriff and VCIJIS partners, several years of intensive data modeling and development have gone into the VCIJIS system. Although some police departments participated in defining this model, data definitions that meet the needs of both the VCIJIS programs and the police systems would be a challenge. Changes to basic VCIJIS data, possibly necessary to accommodate compatibility with local police systems, could be very costly.

On the other hand, development of a common data warehouse format, a new endeavor, would probably be based upon existing RMS (including VCIJIS RMS) database formats and to-be-defined data warehouse structure different from any of these databases. This may be more readily achievable than consideration of strict adherence to the VCIJIS data model, and definitely easier than changing all of the VCIJIS systems to a new model compatible with combined police RMS systems.

A new data warehouse would still have some of the same challenges of a direct transfer and would require interfaces from each police department and VCIJIS. Differences in data models and formats, such as basic length of a name field, required versus optional, timeliness, and accuracy would be major areas of work in any data collection situation. Also, a data warehouse would probably require a one-day information lag for overnight processing from each RMS system and re-organization of data to warehouse format. For crime analysis, this is probably acceptable.

Real-time VCIJIS data, both Sheriff and other partners', is already available in reporting databases. The Sheriff has already begun work on their internal RMS data warehouse. The design of a new cooperative warehouse, once these issues are resolved, seems like a natural technical extension of the Sheriff VCIJIS efforts.

Re: ISD Response to 2002-2003  
Ventura County Grand Jury Report entitled  
*Police Information Systems Within Ventura County*

Lastly, since Sheriff RMS is a combination of Sheriff data and VCIJIS partner data, Sheriff and County Information Systems Department (ISD) coordination with VCIJIS partners and existing working groups is very important.

**R-2. The County Information Systems Department (ISD) should provide technical support to the working group to evaluate the cost and technical characteristics of such a data warehouse. (C-4)**

**County Chief Information Officer (CIO) Response:**

The County CIO concurs that ISD should provide technical support to the previously endorsed working group and is available to participate upon the Sheriff and local Police Chiefs chartering such a project.

In this area, ISD has implemented a reporting database and is currently doing preliminary work on a Sheriff RMS specific data warehouse for statistical reporting. ISD has also been the coordinating agency and project manager for the VCIJIS project. With this experience, ISD welcomes the opportunity to provide the support suggested, and to implement and maintain any new data warehouse or other solutions that result.

This effort would be an extension of the original VCIJIS Data Warehouse Memorandum of Agreement completed on December 14, 1998.

Associated with this recommendation is the potential issue of how to fund ISD to provide such support. As a County Internal Service Fund (ISF), ISD must bill for all its services. Although recent benchmarks confirm ISD's rates are among the lowest of its peer local government technology service organization, these services cannot be provided without reimbursement.

**R-5. Considering the technical issues associated with modern policing, we recommend that the Sheriff and Police Chiefs support the establishment of two standing technical working groups. One group formed to consider data systems and a second group for communications. The objective of these working groups would be to address issues of technical standardization, coordination, identify improvement in capability through new technology and lowering costs. They would provide a resource for recommendations on investment in technical capability and provide a "Lessons Learned" resource from a technical point of view. These groups would be supported by the County Information Systems Department. (C-1, C-2)**

**County Chief Information Officer (CIO) Response:**

The County CIO supports this recommendation and further recommends such support be provided as an extension of its support to the County Sheriff's department.

In the area of communications, recent national events have shown the critical need for emergency personnel from different agencies to be able to communicate with one another in times of crisis. ISD currently works with the County Sheriff's Department and Fire Protection District to coordinate a master County radio plan, which ensures all County emergency personnel can communicate with one another in such times of crisis. This is a tremendous

June 11, 2003

Page 4 of 4

Re: ISD Response to 2002-2003  
Ventura County Grand Jury Report entitled  
*Police Information Systems Within Ventura County*

asset and capability not available in many cities and counties, and is achieved by using standardized radio technology and common, agreed upon communication frequencies. With upcoming changes in radio communications technology and frequencies, and the desire of many local emergency organizations to upgrade to newer radio technology, continued coordination in this area is critical if the County's current interoperability is to be retained.

Coordination in the communications area can also be expanded to include GPS and other newer technologies to assure similar compatibility.

In the area of application (data) systems, there exists the VCIJIS Core group, a VCIJIS governance composed of senior representatives from the County's five criminal justice agencies and a local, city representative appointment by and functioning as a representative of the local city police departments. Expanding the charter of this group, and renewed attendance by the local city representative would serve to address this recommendation.

It also should be noted that Ventura County criminal justice integration (i.e. the County VCIJIS system) and countywide law enforcement data systems standardization (including local city systems and data) could have conflicting strategies. To avoid any potential disruption to the integration and cost-sharing taking place in the VCIJIS environment, it is further recommended that standardization among law enforcement should be coordinated via an expanded charter and renewed city participation in the aforementioned VCIJIS Core Group.

Cooperation on grants in these areas, which may have traditionally been competitive or unrelated among law enforcement agencies, might bring the additional benefits that are sought. This, also, seems to be an important policy issue above the technical working group level, but something that should affect the charter of the group.

Please contact me at (805) 654-5013 with any further questions you or the Grand Jury may have.



J. Matthew Carroll  
Chief Information Officer  
County of Ventura

Attachment

c: John F. Johnston, County Executive Officer