

July 23, 2008

Don Cody, Foreman  
Ventura County Grand Jury  
800 S. Victoria Ave., L#3751  
Ventura, CA 93009

To the Grand Jury:

The Ventura Port District is responding to the Ventura County 2007 – 2008 Grand Jury Final Report: Ventura Port District: Delivery of Fire Services.

The Grand Jury recognized that the District and the Ventura Fire Department have collaborated in innovative ways to partially address delayed response times. The District will continue to do so until the factors that have led to the delay in building and staffing a fire station in the Harbor Area are resolved. A suitable site has been identified on District-owned land on Parcel 19A, most likely, the northeast corner of Harbor Boulevard and Schooner Drive. The City does not have the funds to construct and staff Station 7, however finding a site is a significant step in finding a permanent solution to delayed response times.

#### **Response to Findings**

**Findings F-17 to F-28 related to the Ventura Harbor Patrol:** The District agrees with the findings of the Grand Jury

**Finding F-29:** The District is noting that there is a 36.6% difference between VCFD records and Port District statistics. Fire Department records indicate that HPOs assisted in 164 fire calls and medical aids in 2007. Port District statistics indicate that Ventura Harbor Patrol responded to 100 Medical Calls and 8 Fire Calls, 108 total.

**Findings F-30 to F-35:** The District agrees with the findings of the Grand Jury

#### **Response to Recommendations**

**R-04:** *The District should continue the use of HPOs to deliver EMT services in the Harbor Area until Fire Station 7 is built and staffed.*

The District **concurs** with this recommendation. The public and the HPOs have benefitted from the close relationship between the Ventura Fire Department and the Harbor Patrol. The Fire Department provides quarterly training opportunities for the Harbor Patrol Officers to help fulfill the continuing education requirements for EMTs as set forth by the County Emergency Medical Services.

**R-05:** *The District should reinstate Harbor Patrol staffing to a 24-hour seven days-a-week basis to enhance response time during those hours not covered by the City's roving engine.*

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This recommendation **will not be implemented** in the near future. The District has considered, and will periodically reconsider, the feasibility of reinstating 24-hour patrol coverage. The Harbormaster has examined the following alternatives:

- Changing the Harbor Patrol from a 4/10 schedule to a 5/8 schedule;
- Implementing a 12-hour shift;
- Hiring a private security company to provide patrolling responsibilities;
- Changing the Harbor Patrol to a 24-hour shift.

He has concluded that each alternative would require either:

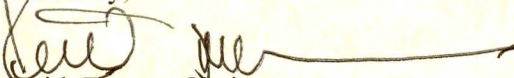
- Hiring additional staff;
- Modifying the staffing so only one officer would be on duty for an extended period of time each night;
- A complete change in philosophy from one of "active patrol" to one of "respond only", similar to that of a Fire Department.

Thus far, the Board is pleased with the public service that is provided by the 4/10 schedule with 20-hour staffing each day. Although 24-hour staffing was originally discontinued for budgetary constraints, the current system offers the following benefits to the public and the District's employees.

- The District provides a minimum of two Harbor Patrol Officers on duty for the hours that the Operations Center is staffed and up to four officers on weekends;
- Turn over in the Harbor Patrol is low. This is in no small part attributable to the 4/10 schedule and the fact that the officers do not have to work graveyard shifts;
- Staff is better utilized during busier hours instead of being underutilized during the early morning hours and providing a decreased level of service because only one officer would be on duty for at least 8 hours of a 24-hour period. Calls for service have been analyzed several times in the past. Each analysis indicated that 0.5% of calls for service occurred from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.

The District is committed to assisting in finding a permanent solution which will eliminate the long-standing history of extended VCFD response times in the Harbor Area. This situation may adversely affect residents and visitors to the Harbor, but it appears that until a solution is found this could affect future development in the Harbor.

Sincerely,



Keith Turner, Chairman

Ventura Port District Board of Port Commissioners

Cc: Oscar Peña, General Manager  
Honorable Colleen Toy White, Presiding Judge