



county of ventura

LAWRENCE L. MATHENEY
TREASURER
TAX COLLECTOR
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR

July 17, 2008

Don R. Hansen
Assistant Treasurer-Tax Collector

Laurie Montes
Assistant Public Administrator-Guardian

The Honorable Colleen Toy White
Presiding Judge
Ventura County Superior Court
Hall of Justice
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009-2120

Re: **Response to 2007-08 Grand Jury Report on Security**
Treasurer-Tax Collector, Public Administrator-Public Guardian Issues

Dear Presiding Judge White:

This writing represents the response of the Treasurer-Tax Collector, Public Administrator-Public Guardian (TTC-PAPG) to the report issued by the 2007-2008 Grand Jury on the important subject of safety and security in the Hall of Administration building. The work that resulted in the Grand Jury's report is greatly appreciated. During an investigative meeting with senior management, questions asked by the jurors raised issues that resulted in immediate improvements to the security of operations. These included the installation of glass strips above the counter surfaces to maintain a continuous height barrier without cutting off contact with the public. The review meeting also resulted in discussions with General Services Agency (GSA) to learn of the options available for replacing the non-reinforced half doors that had become the point of least resistance in our perimeter. The door replacement has, unfortunately, been a project that is apparently more complicated than it first appeared and has not yet been completed. The Grand Jury's pre-report questions also resulted in a more formalized policy of removing cash from the drawers used by the front counter cashiers.

We live in a society that has become increasingly isolated and motivated by fear. Those two factors work against the traditional concepts of liberty, freedom and access to government. If all the interactions between the TTC-PAPG and the public we serve are to be done without risk, then smiles and handshakes would be replaced with bulletproof barriers and automated cashiers. In the opinion of management, total workplace security would result in losses that would be significantly greater than the incremental assurance that "we" are safe from "them" and "they" are safe from "us".

It is with a sense of balancing the interests of service to the public and safety to staff that we respond to the Findings and Recommendations affecting our operations as follows:

Responses to Findings:

Agree: F-13, F-14, F-16, F-18, F-19, F-20, F-21, F-22

Disagree partially: F-17 requires a clarification. The PA/PG public counter is separated from the referenced "half-door" by a solid four foot long partition, approximately 62 inches high. The partition addresses a security need by partially obscuring from public view the work area of an employee.

Disagree: F-15. This finding incorrectly notes that there is "no written in-house security plan or in-service training, other than for new employees, that instructs them what to do during critical incidents. . ." As confirmed by F-16, there is a written policy that addresses procedures to be followed in the event of a front counter robbery. A written copy of this policy was previously provided to the Grand Jury. The effectiveness of that policy would be compromised by making the specific plan public. By separate cover, a duplicate copy of that policy is being provided.

In the opinion of management, this policy covers the most likely type of critical incident that would be encountered.

Responses to Recommendations:

R-08 The department will ask the General Services Administration for assistance in developing an appropriate security plan that covers a broader range of potential critical incidents. Our target is to adopt and distribute to staff the written security plan no later than September, 2008.

R-09 Following the September, 2008 adoption of the new security plan, we will arrange for in-service training of all staff. A record of attendance will be maintained, and annual refresher training will be conducted.

R-10 We do not presently intend to implement the recommendation to have GSA monitor the video cameras that cover the working spaces of the TTC-PAPG. We are informed that the camera feeds that run to GSA's security headquarters are not actively monitored for unfolding risk situations. Rather, their primary purpose is to record activity for later analysis. The existing camera system in the TTC-PAPG offices already has recording capability. In our opinion, connecting the TTC-PAPG cameras to GSA's network would involve the expenditure of taxpayer funds with no appreciable benefit.

R-11 We do not presently intend to add a panic alarm in the department head's office. The existing system, which now provides trigger points at the spots where security would be breached, is relatively fragile and susceptible to false readings. The department head's office does not have a direct line of sight with the areas that would be first vulnerable to an issue. Therefore, adding another sending unit would increase the chances for a false alarm without providing an appreciable increase in security. If there were an intrusion, it

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would be more expedient to open one of the stairwell doors (one is located immediately outside the door to the department head) which are already equipped with alarms.

R-12 As an alternative to the expense of buying, installing and servicing a security camera in the conference room to monitor sensitive cash and other asset handling, these activities have been moved to the Treasury vault, which is equipped with fulltime video coverage.

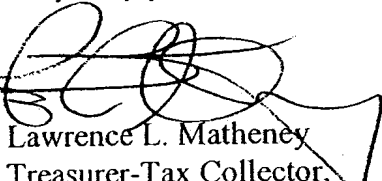
R-13 The TTC has requested GSA's assistance in the selection and installation of taller and sturdier gateways for staff and visitors. Installation will occur on GSA's timetable.

R-26 The TTC-PAPG will designate a representative to attend all future meetings of the Physical Security Council.

R-27 The TTC-PAPG will participate in the security/awareness training provided by GSA or other designated county program.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the work of the 2007-08 Ventura County Grand Jury.

Very truly yours,



Lawrence L. Matheney
Treasurer-Tax Collector,
Public Administrator-Public Guardian

c: Marty Robinson, County Executive Officer
Members of the Grand Jury