

Scott Mitnick
City Manager

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Vehicle Impound Fees in Ventura County
Report Date: May 8, 2012
Response By: Scott Mitnick, City Manager

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VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

FINDINGS:

- We agree with the findings numbered **FI-01**.

The City of Thousand Oaks has classified Tow Fees into four (4) different categories, which are 1) Standard (\$160), 2) All Arrests (\$240), Unlicensed/Revoked or Suspended Drivers (\$300) and 4) DUI (\$400) tow fees. Each fee was analyzed by the Thousand Oaks Police Department to determine the personnel and materials cost. It is City Council's policy to establish fees that cover the costs of performing a given task at 100 percent cost recovery. User Fees are calculated by the responsible Department and reviewed by the Finance Department. At the time the tow fees were last updated, it was determined to include an \$80 Administrative Fee offset cost for the Thousand Oaks' "Start Smart" driving class to the Unlicensed/Revoked or Suspended Drivers tow fee.

The City of Thousand Oaks approved a resolution on May 8, 2012 to revise the Unlicensed/Revoked or Suspended Drivers user fee to remove the costs related to the "Start Smart" driving class. The City will also refund the cost of the "Start Smart" driving class to those individuals that were issued and paid "Unlicensed/Revoked or Suspended Drivers" tow fees.

Since April 4, 2012, staff has not been charging the \$80 Administrative Fee for the release of those vehicles towed by persons driving without a license or with a suspended or revoked license.

- We agree with the findings numbered **FI-04**.

Thousand Oaks City Council policy is to process fees that cover the costs of performing a given task at 100 percent when possible. It should be noted that there are exceptions to this policy, which are approved by City Council. Each tow fee has been analyzed by the Thousand Oaks Police Department to determine the personnel classification, time, and materials costs to perform the various tasks related to each type of tow. When the fees were initially calculated, it was deemed reasonable to include an offset cost for the Thousand Oaks' "Start Smart" driving class to the Unlicensed/Revoked or Suspended Drivers tow fee.

- We agree with the findings numbered **FI-06**.

The City of Thousand Oaks developed the time and materials costs estimate that occur after the traffic stop transitions to the vehicle impound process. The City also agrees that there currently is no standardized process to calculate tow fees in Ventura County.

Thousand Oaks Police staff is willing to work with the other cities in the County and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office to look into a standardized tow fee calculation for all Ventura County cities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Recommendations numbered **R-02** have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The Thousand Oaks Police Chief has stated he is willing to work with the various cities in Ventura County and County officials to identify a standard set of tasks, labor hours, and overhead items to come up with a more consistent tow fee to be used throughout the County. These efforts are currently in progress.

- Recommendations numbered **R-03** have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The City of Thousand Oaks agrees with this recommendation and practice. Once the standardized cost methodology is agreed upon by all the cities of Ventura County and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, the City will recalculate and update the tow fees. Once the new fees are determined, staff will take a Resolution to update tow fees to City Council.



- Recommendations numbered **R-04** have been implemented.

The City of Thousand Oaks approved a Resolution on May 8, 2012 to eliminate the "Start Smart" administration fee from the Unlicensed/Revoked or Suspended Drivers tow fee to comply with Vehicle Code section 22850.5, subdivision (a).

SUMMARY:

The City of Thousand Oaks and the Thousand Oaks Police Department wishes to thank the Grand Jury for its time in performing their review and determining various recommendations. We feel confident that the cities of Ventura County can come to an agreement on a consistent methodology to determine future city tow fees.

Date: May 8, 2012

Signed: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "K. A. [unclear]", written over a horizontal line.

Number of pages attached 3

