

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON GROUP HOMES

BACKGROUND

When children, for many different reasons, are not able to live at home, alternatives are needed. It has become the responsibility of the counties to provide out-of-home placements for many of these children. Consequently, some children are placed in foster care. Group homes come under the heading of specialized foster care. Small residential group homes have a maximum of six beds and are manned by a house manager and staff workers. Homes must meet requirements of the California State Welfare and Institutions Codes and are licensed by the State Community Care Licensing (CCL).

FINDINGS

The Probation Department, Children's Services Department, and the Department of Behavioral Health place children in these homes. The types of children placed in group homes include dependent children, juvenile wards, developmentally disabled, and seriously emotionally disturbed (SED). The SED require out-of-home placement in order to benefit from an educational

program. Top level placements incur costs up to \$9,700 per month per child for placement, education, and related mental health services.

San Bernardino County youth are also placed in group homes in other counties and states.

The California State Department of Social Services, through its CCL Division, licenses group homes. The homes must have an AFDC-FC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care) rating established by the California Department of Social Services. Higher rates provide more services and receive more funding. Levels range from RCL-1 (Residential Care Level) to RCL-14, with the RCL-14 level requiring the highest level of care. This highest level is for the most seriously emotionally disturbed children. The mental health portion of the group home contracts are authorized and monitored by the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH).

Funding for group home residential care and treatment is a combination federal/state/county function.

As of June 1999 available San Bernardino County beds for the highest three levels were:

- RCL-11 216
- RCL-12 274
- RCL-14 36

There is no classification for RCL-13

There are twelve RCL-11 providers, more than 20 RCL-12 providers, and one RCL-14 provider.

Only one-third of the total group home beds in San Bernardino County are filled by children from this County and children from other counties fill two-thirds. An average of 540 San Bernardino County youth, at any given time, are placed out of the County or out of the state.

The approval process for new group homes can take up to two years to satisfy all requirements. After approval, a provider can open additional facilities without another application.

With a sole contractor providing RCL-14 beds, there is no alternative placement for level 14 children. With additional support services, lower level homes could be upgraded to accommodate the need for additional RCL-14 beds.

The State of California publishes a pamphlet containing guidelines for staff workers of group homes concerning inappropriate physical and sexual contact with clients. Group homes have used and adapted these guidelines. There is no comparable educational material directed toward the parents or guardians of clients to alert them to potential abuse or exploitation situations.

Daily interactions among disturbed children in group settings frequently exacerbate their behavioral problems.

In seeking alternatives to RCL-14 placements, social workers have stated that early intervention and support services to troubled families may divert some high-risk children from the need for placement, or allow them to be placed in lower level facilities.

Social workers visiting some facilities have complained that they are routinely denied unannounced access to their clients. Explanation given is that unannounced visits from social workers disrupt the activities of the home.

There is a computer database that is used to track the locations of children in placements. Reports are regularly generated by this system that identify the clients in a particular home. This information is easily available to the directors, deputy directors, and managers. Social workers and supervisors, who might need this information immediately, cannot as easily access it even though it falls within their area of responsibility.

A crisis situation necessitated the potential alternate placement of 36 seriously disturbed juveniles. That crisis was averted, but no contingency plan was available for emergency placements of this number of clients.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 00-162 ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE THE APPLICATIONS OF ADDITIONAL LEVEL 14 GROUP HOME PROVIDERS, AND ENCOURAGE EXISTING PROVIDERS TO UPGRADE THEIR PROGRAMS TO QUALIFY FOR LEVEL 14 STATUS.

- 00-163 SPONSOR LEGISLATION THAT WOULD CONTROL UNRESTRICTED GROWTH OF ADDITIONAL HOMES BY EXISTING PROVIDERS AT ALL LEVELS.

- 00-164 DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS DIRECTED TOWARD PARENTS AND GUARDIANS THAT WOULD ALERT THEM TO INAPPROPRIATE PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL CONTACT WITH THEIR

CHILD BY ADULTS WHO ARE CHARGED WITH THEIR CARE OR SUPERVISION.

- 00-165 DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES THAT WOULD PLACE CLIENTS IN HOME SETTINGS AWAY FROM REGULAR CLOSE CONTACT WITH OTHER DISTURBED CHILDREN. USE PILOT PROGRAMS TO STUDY ALTERNATIVES.
- 00-166 DEVELOP, FUND, AND IMPLEMENT FAMILY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR HIGH-RISK CHILDREN TO AVOID PLACEMENT OR TO FACILITATE PLACEMENT IN LOWER LEVELS.
- 00-167 PROVIDE OPEN DOOR ACCESS FOR CASEWORKERS TO VISIT THEIR CLIENTS.
- 00-168 DEVELOP A SOFTWARE PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES FOR TRACKING OF CHILDREN BY NAME AND BY PLACEMENT WITHIN THE GROUP HOME SYSTEM, THAT IDENTIFIES RESIDENTS OF PARTICULAR HOMES, AND WHICH IS AVAILABLE TO ALL AUTHORIZED USERS.
- 00-169 DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR THE MASS EMERGENCY RELOCATION OF CLIENTS FROM ALL GROUP HOME SETTINGS.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

BACKGROUND

The 1996-97 Grand Jury expressed concern with safety in the San Bernardino Courthouse. Noting that most concerns were still not resolved, the 1999-2000 Grand Jury expanded the investigation into the courthouse and other emergency services regarding the welfare of the public.

FINDINGS - SAN BERNARDINO COURTHOUSE

The elevators in the main courthouse building did not have current annual inspection certificates displayed. Elevator access near the Jury Assembly Room in the annex has inordinate delays. Impaneled juries use the annex elevators to get to courtrooms on the upper floors. The stairwell in the southeast corner of the annex does not have an opening into the jury assembly area. An exit to the parking lot is labeled as "closed for security reasons" and is used as an emergency exit only.

Other typical safety item concerns include:

- Fire extinguisher locations were not marked
- Fire hose locations were not marked
- A bicycle was stored in a hallway
- Exit signs with arrows were missing
- Emergency evacuation route signs were not posted in all public areas
- Inadequate emergency lighting in the stairwells
- Routine safety inspections are not performed on a regular basis.

These infractions led to a telephone call to Risk Management. Part of their mission statement concerns the responsibility for "public liability". Grand Jurors asked who was responsible for the safety of the public while in the courthouse. Risk Management stated that it is the responsibility of each department to have all necessary safety items in each individual work area corrected.

Contact was made with several departments within the courthouse. Grand Jurors were informed that these safety items were a part of the building. While the court, which is State funded, would pay for remodeling of some non-public areas, most items were considered public areas (halls, stairways, elevators, restrooms, etc.) and were the responsibility of the County.

Grand Jurors requested a safety tour of the courthouse. A meeting to review the courthouse facility was arranged with a Safety Specialist from Risk Management. A member of Court Administration joined the tour.

The representative from Risk Management took notes of unsafe or problem areas. He asked that the Grand Jury inspection be stopped, and conceded that it would take a long time to conduct an inspection of the entire building. A "safety inspection" would be completed but it would have to take

place over several days. The results would be given to the Grand Jury. This process was agreed upon.

Copies of previous safety inspections requested were to be provided to the Grand Jury. The 1996-97 Grand Jury noted that the City of San Bernardino Fire Department conducted inspections in the past and violations were turned over to the County Safety Officer.

The safety inspection report dated February 28, 2000 made by the Safety Specialist, was received by the Grand Jury. The response emphasized employee work areas, lacked concern for the general public, and omitted the most basic violations observed by the Grand Jury. Several attachments to the report made reference to policies concerning safety of employees, work areas and management responsibilities.

The safety inspection report listed the following problems (some observations may have included general hazards within specific work areas):

General Hazards 9 separate problem items occurring throughout the building and/or at one or more than one location or floor

Annex Ground Floor - 7 problems covering three main zones
First Floor - 6 problems located within one section
Second Floor - 5 problems located in two areas
Third Floor - 12 problems within five departments
Fourth Floor - 2 problems
Fifth Floor - General hazards

Main Courthouse First Floor - 17 problems
Second Floor - 7 problems*
Third Floor - 11 problems

*This report listed only the Grand Jury area and offices in the north part of the building. There were other items observed by the Grand Jury such as emergency lighting not working, stairwell not marked on two existing evacuation plans, fire extinguisher and hose locations not marked, etc. in other areas of the second floor.

The 77 violations of the California Code of Regulations listed above speak generally to the safety of the employees, not the general public.

This list of infractions was sent to Risk Management, Facilities Management, and Court Administration asking who was responsible for having the violations corrected. Responses reflected the following:

- **Risk Management** - Plays a consultant role and does not actively participate in the physical abatement of hazards or safety violations. They listed the Courts and Facilities Management as responsible for most items. They also included the Sheriff's Department as being responsible for some corrections.
- **Facilities Management** - Stated everyone is responsible for safety: the occupants of the building, the public who can report safety concerns to the occupants, Risk Management and the Facilities Management Department.
- **Court Administration** - Cited the County, as per Government Code Section 68073.

As of April 29, 2000 little, if anything, had been done to correct any problems in the public areas.

Since this investigation began, the Marshal and Sheriff's Offices have been combined.

Safety and Policy Manuals have not been updated.

The listing of Safety Coordinators is outdated.

There is no one person responsible for the coordinated effort for the maintenance of public safety for the entire building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 00-170 PERFORM THE ANNUAL INSPECTION OF THE ELEVATORS AND POST A COPY OF THE APPROVED SAFETY CERTIFICATE IN EACH ELEVATOR CAR ON A TIMELY BASIS.
- 00-171 CONSTRUCT A DOORWAY INTO THE STAIRWELL IN THE JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM SO JURORS CAN USE THE STAIRS TO ACCESS COURTROOMS ON UPPER FLOORS, AND EASE THE BURDEN ON ELEVATOR TRAFFIC.
- 00-172 CONDUCT AN INSPECTION OF THE COURTHOUSE USING AN AGENCY THAT WILL UNDERTAKE THE REVIEW WITH THE TOTAL USAGE OF THE ENTIRE BUILDING AS THE MAJOR CONSIDERATION.

- 00-173 IDENTIFY ONE PERSON OR DEPARTMENT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COORDINATED EFFORT FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE SAFETY OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN THE COURTHOUSE.
- 00-174 IDENTIFY WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COST TO REPAIR, REPLACE, OR INSTALL EQUIPMENT FOR THE SAFETY OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN THE COURTHOUSE.
- 00-175 REPAIR, REPLACE, OR INSTALL EQUIPMENT, SIGNS OR OTHER ITEMS AS NEEDED TO PROTECT OR INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN CASE OF EMERGENCY.
- 00-176 TAG, DATE, AND INITIAL ANY SAFETY DEFECTS NOTED FOR FUTURE FOLLOW-UP.

FINDINGS - VICTORVILLE DISPATCH CENTER

The facilities of the Victorville Sheriff's Dispatch Center are situated in the same building as the jail facility and the Sheriff's substation. Dispatch workers leave the building through a door that is adjacent to the door used by recently released inmates, and then must walk to a shared parking lot. Employees who leave late at night have expressed fear regarding their safety and security.

This problem was also addressed by the 1996-97 Grand Jury who recommended a stand-alone dispatch center, away from the jail facility. At that time, the Sheriff's response was that the cost of a stand-alone Dispatch Center would be almost twice that of an expansion of the building where the Dispatch Center is now housed. The Dispatch Center itself is now being renovated and enlarged. The problem of employee safety and security, particularly late at night, remains.

RECOMMENDATION

- 00-177 PROVIDE A FENCED AND LOCKED PARKING AREA FOR EMPLOYEE VEHICLES. PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE DISPATCH CENTER PARKING AREA THROUGH A FENCED-OFF PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON VEHICLE SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As authorized by California Penal Code Section 926, the 1999-2000 San Bernardino County Grand Jury requested that the Harvey M. Rose Accountancy Corporation conduct a limited scope Management Audit of the San Bernardino County Vehicle Services Department and County Vehicle Policies. This audit was conducted during the months of February through April 2000. A full description of the scope and methodology is included in the full audit report, which is available from the Grand Jury. The audit responds to the Grand Jury's request to:

- Review operations of the San Bernardino County Vehicle Services Department related to light-duty (i.e. less than one ton) vehicles, including its vehicle maintenance function, its management and replacement program for County motor pool vehicles, internal controls to protect vehicles and related assets from misuse and theft, and the adequacy of the computer system used to track and manage vehicle use and maintenance.
- Review Countywide policies for vehicle use and care.
- Review the adequacy of vehicle user departments' systems of control for managing vehicles, and the business justification for the current assignment of vehicles to County employees.

The Vehicle Services Department (VSD) operates under policies of the Board of Supervisors to provide work-related transportation to County employees, primarily through operation of a central Motor Pool and garage. The department finances its services by operating as an Internal Service Fund, charging customer departments for its services. For Fiscal Year 1999-2000, the two funds comprising the Vehicle Services Department had budgeted appropriations of approximately \$25.5 million, and staffing of 126.1 full-time equivalents. At the time of the audit, the department was responsible for managing and maintaining 1,573 light-duty vehicles, as well as maintaining heavy equipment owned and operated by other departments.

The methodology for this audit, conducted according to standards included in the United States General Accounting Office's *Government Auditing Standards, 1994 Revision*, prepared by the Comptroller General of the United States, included: 1) an initial entrance conference with department managers; 2) a review of all aspects of department operations, based on a variety of information sources; 3) review of survey data gathered by the Grand Jury on vehicle user department vehicle policies and practices; 4) interviews of ten County departments identified by Vehicle Services as its largest customers; 5) preparation of a draft report; 6) an exit conference with the Vehicle Services Department and reviews of selected issues with some user departments, and; 7) preparation of the final report.

Based on these steps, nine findings and 36 recommendations were developed which we believe will improve user departments' management of their vehicles, improve oversight of vehicle use by the Board of Supervisors, and improve operations of the Vehicle Services Department. Summaries of these findings and recommendations follow.

FINDINGS - DEVELOPING DEPARTMENTAL VEHICLE PROCEDURES

While Countywide policies and procedures exist for vehicle usage, a Grand Jury survey and interviews with selected departments found only 18 of 41 departments had formal written procedures to implement County policies in areas such as tracking vehicle use and mileage, and determining when employees would be assigned vehicles on a 24-hour basis. As a result, procedures vary from department to department, may not be clear to employees and may not be adequate to identify and prevent unauthorized vehicle use. Furthermore, it is not clear that the justification for all 24-hour vehicle assignments is clearly documented to reflect the duties of the employees assigned these vehicles. By developing clear written procedures to implement the County Vehicle Policies and Standard Practice, vehicle requirements will be clear to employees, and sufficient information will be available to properly track vehicle use. Further, requiring vehicle take-home assignments to be submitted to the Vehicle Services Committee for approval would also ensure that employees are permitted to take vehicles home only when justified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

- 00-178 REQUIRE ALL DEPARTMENTS TO DEVELOP FORMAL WRITTEN INTERNAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR VEHICLE USE, IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT COUNTY VEHICLE POLICIES. DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURES SHOULD INCLUDE METHODS TO TRACK VEHICLE USAGE ON A PER TRIP OR PER DAY BASIS, INFORMATION ON HOW CARS ARE TO BE RESERVED BY EMPLOYEES AND ISSUED TO THEM, INSTRUCTIONS ON WHERE CARS AND THE KEYS TO THEM ARE TO BE STORED, AND CRITERIA FOR WHEN CARS WILL BE ASSIGNED EXCLUSIVELY TO AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE'S USE, EITHER DURING THE REGULAR WORK-DAY ONLY, OR ON A 24-HOUR TAKE-HOME BASIS.

- 00-179 REINSTITUTE THE VEHICLE SERVICES COMMITTEE FOR PURPOSES OF APPROVING 24-HOUR VEHICLE ASSIGNMENTS AS REQUIRED UNDER COUNTY POLICY.

- 00-180 DEVELOP MORE SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO DETERMINE WHEN 24-HOUR ASSIGNMENT OF A VEHICLE TO AN EMPLOYEE IS APPROPRIATE, INCLUDING DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF AN EMPLOYEE'S DUTIES, HOW OFTEN THOSE DUTIES REQUIRE RESPONSE OUTSIDE OF NORMAL WORK HOURS, AND A DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF SECURITY ISSUES JUSTIFYING PROVIDING CARS ON A TAKE-HOME BASIS, ALONG WITH CERTIFICATION BY EMPLOYEES OF THEIR ABILITY TO GARAGE A VEHICLE AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS DAMAGE OR THEFT IF THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO SECURE IT.

By adopting the recommendations in this section, vehicle policies and procedures will be clear to all employees, better information will be available to track vehicle use and identify improper use, and 24-hour vehicles will be assigned to employees only when appropriate.

FINDINGS – MOTOR POOL RATES

The Vehicle Services Department (VSD) charges Motor Pool users a fixed monthly rate and a variable mileage rate for use of motor pool vehicles. County Policy 02-05 requires the Auditor/Controller-Recorder to establish procedures for departments to follow in establishing rates, and provides for the Auditor/Controller-Recorder to provide oversight in the rate process. However, VSD is responsible to develop its fees and to forward its recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for approval. The Auditor/Controller-Recorder office would normally conduct a detailed review of the VSD proposed rates. However, due to staff reductions, it has not conducted a detailed review for four years. During this period, VSD has only changed its rates in FY 1999-00 by one cent for fuel and oil charges in all vehicle size categories.

Based upon our review of the monthly fee, it appears that user departments are being overcharged by VSD. Our analysis of the most recent purchase order to replace 238 Motor Pool vehicles found that VSD had recovered \$633,000 more in replacement fees than the cost of new vehicles. Further, in FY 1998-99, VSD collected almost \$800,000 more from user departments for insurance charges than the department was charged by Risk Management for insurance. Even though the department has been aware of the reduced insurance charges since at least 1998, no action was taken to adjust this fee. As of June 30, 1999, the Motor Pool Fund had a \$2.8 million surplus, which may be due in part to the overcharges identified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE DIRECTOR OF VEHICLE SERVICES:

- 00-181 IMPROVE THE UNDERSTANDING OF VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT RATES, BY PREPARING AN INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT EXPLAINING THE RATES. THIS HANDOUT SHOULD BE PRESENTED TO ALL COUNTY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL.

- 00-182 CONDUCT A DETAILED FEE STUDY ADDRESSING THE ISSUES CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT, INCLUDING THE BASIS ON WHICH REPLACEMENT AND INSURANCE FEES ARE CHARGED TO USER DEPARTMENTS FOR MOTOR POOL VEHICLES, HOW VARIABLE PER MILE RATE CHARGE CAN BE MADE MORE REFLECTIVE OF ACTUAL COSTS BY VEHICLE TYPE, AND HOW THE MOTOR POOL FUND \$2.8 MILLION SURPLUS SHOULD BE UTILIZED. THIS STUDY

SHOULD PROVIDE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS WITH INFORMATION ON THE IMPACT OF RETURNING THE UNRESTRICTED FUNDS TO VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT CUSTOMERS THROUGH ONE-TIME REBATES, OR OVER SEVERAL YEARS THROUGH THE REDUCTION OF FEES CHARGED BY THE DEPARTMENT, OR THROUGH ADDITIONAL VEHICLE REPLACEMENTS.

Implementation of the recommendations in this section will ensure that fees for the use of Motor Pool vehicles are consistent with the costs of providing services.

FINDINGS – CUSTOMER SERVICE ISSUES

In interviews with representatives of ten County departments that are significant Vehicle Services Department customers, seven departments, 70 percent, complained about the service provided by the Vehicle Services Garage. Most of these complaints dealt with excessive turnaround time for repairs, and poor communication between Vehicle Services and customer departments. Furthermore, a sample of 70 work orders for basic servicing completed during July 1999 found 22 work orders, 31 percent, which required two days or more to complete.

Because of dissatisfaction with VSD's service, two of the 10 departments stated they would prefer to manage their own vehicles and arrange for maintenance through private contractors, if allowed to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

- 00-183 DEVELOP ADVANCE RESERVATION PROGRAMS AT ALL REPAIR LOCATIONS TO PROVIDE BASIC SERVICE OF AN OIL CHANGE, VEHICLE LUBRICATION AND SAFETY CHECK TO CUSTOMERS WHILE THEY WAIT.

- 00-184 DEVELOP METHODS TO BETTER COORDINATE COMMUNICATION AMONG THE MOTOR POOL DISPATCHER, SERVICE WRITERS, AND DEPARTMENT CUSTOMERS, SO THAT CUSTOMERS WHO NEED LOANER VEHICLES DUE TO VEHICLE SERVICING RECEIVE, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, A LOANER THAT IS EQUIVALENT TO

THEIR REGULAR VEHICLE. SUCH STEPS COULD INCLUDE INSTRUCTING SERVICE WRITERS TO ROUTINELY ASK CUSTOMERS CALLING TO ARRANGE SERVICE ABOUT THEIR NEED FOR A LOANER VEHICLE, AND TRANSFERRING THOSE CUSTOMERS AUTOMATICALLY TO THE MOTOR POOL DISPATCHER TO ARRANGE FOR THE LOANER.

- 00-185 DEVELOP A CUSTOMER HANDBOOK, BASED ON ADDING INFORMATION TO THE EXISTING HANDBOOK NOW PROVIDED IN VEHICLES, THAT INCLUDES DESCRIBING HOW EMPLOYEES MAY ARRANGE FOR VEHICLE REPAIRS, HOW TO ARRANGE FOR A LOANER CAR, AND OTHER KEY INFORMATION. THIS HANDBOOK SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO ALL COUNTY EMPLOYEES, AND PLACED IN EVERY VEHICLE ISSUED BY THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT.
- 00-186 DEVELOP A FORM FOR USE AT ALL REPAIR CENTERS BY CUSTOMERS TO DESCRIBE IN WRITING ANY PROBLEMS THEY WANT CHECKED ON THEIR VEHICLE.
- 00-187 TRACK, EITHER ON COMPUTERIZED WORK ORDERS OR SEPARATELY, ALL ATTEMPTS BY THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT STAFF TO ADVISE CUSTOMERS WHEN THEIR VEHICLE IS READY TO BE PICKED UP.
- 00-188 DEVELOP A CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY OF VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT CUSTOMERS, BASED ON SURVEYS THAT WOULD BE SENT MONTHLY TO A RANDOM SAMPLE OF CUSTOMERS BASED ON COMPLETED WORK ORDERS. SURVEY RESULTS WOULD BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND CORRECT CUSTOMER SERVICE PROBLEMS.
- 00-189 ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE TO HOLD QUARTERLY MEETINGS BETWEEN THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENTS THAT ARE ITS MAJOR CUSTOMERS. THESE MEETINGS COULD BE CONDUCTED BY A RECONSTITUTED VEHICLE SERVICES COMMITTEE, UNDER THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, OR BY A SEPARATE COMMITTEE FORMED BY THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

Following the recommendations in this section should improve communication between the Vehicle Services Department and customers, improve customer satisfaction, reduce customer complaints, and reduce the

likelihood that customers will pursue alternative arrangements for vehicle repairs, such as using private contractors.

FINDINGS – PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE OF MOTOR POOL VEHICLES

The Vehicle Services Department (VSD) is responsible to establish maintenance standards for all Motor Pool vehicles, and can schedule the required services. And, while VSD takes various steps to remind departments of required maintenance, VSD management does not have the authority to bring vehicles in for servicing when required. The department has established preventative maintenance standards of 4,000 miles or six months, whichever comes first. Our review of a total of 5,627 vehicle preventative maintenance services performed between July 1, 1998 and March 16, 2000, using a 4,250-mile/200-day maintenance criteria, found that only 40 percent of the vehicles serviced in this 20-month period were serviced in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE DIRECTOR OF VEHICLE SERVICES:

00-190 DEVELOP A POLICY FOR APPROVAL BY THE VEHICLE SERVICES COMMITTEE TO SCHEDULE PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE WHEN DEPARTMENTS ARE NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH CURRENT PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE STANDARDS, INCLUDING SANCTIONS TO ENFORCE THE PROCEDURE.

Implementing such a procedure will ensure that all 1,573 Motor Pool vehicles for which VSD is responsible are properly serviced within the preventative maintenance period established by VSD. The continued maintenance of Motor Pool vehicles is important, since it is generally recognized that regular preventative maintenance will keep down the overall cost of maintaining a vehicle over its useful life.

FINDINGS – VEHICLE MAINTENANCE COSTS AND PRODUCTIVITY

Although the Vehicle Services Department contends its maintenance charges are lower than the private sector, based on hourly labor rates, the department cannot explain how its rates are determined, and documentation

to determine whether all costs were included is lacking. Furthermore, the department does not have a formal system to evaluate repair productivity by comparing actual repair times to industry norms, even though department procedures state that such standards will be followed. An analysis of 42 repair operations on 18 work orders obtained from Vehicle Services found 13 cases, 31 percent, where work required longer than industry norms, although these differences may partly result from how mechanics report their time. This lack of management information prevents Vehicle Services from properly evaluating its own performance, and from competing for repair business from the Sheriff's Department and other County vehicle users that do not use its services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

- 00-191 CONDUCT A RATE STUDY, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE AUDITOR/CONTROLLER-RECORDER'S OFFICE, TO DETERMINE THE BASIS FOR ITS LABOR CHARGES AND ENSURE THAT ALL COSTS ARE PROPERLY INCLUDED IN THAT CHARGE.
- 00-192 SUBMIT A BID FOR THE NEWLY PROPOSED COUNTYWIDE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR VEHICLE REPAIR SERVICES, BASED ON THE LABOR CHARGE INFORMATION THE DEPARTMENT HAS DEVELOPED.
- 00-193 DIRECT MECHANICS TO REPORT VEHICLE REPAIR IN ONE-TENTH OF AN HOUR INCREMENTS.
- 00-194 DIRECT MECHANICS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON VEHICLE REPAIRS, AND TO ELIMINATE THE INDEX-CARD SYSTEM FOR TRACKING VEHICLE REPAIRS CURRENTLY MAINTAINED IN THE AUTO SHOP.
- 00-195 DEVELOP A FORMAL SYSTEM TO COMPARE ACTUAL AUTO REPAIR WORK ORDERS TO INDUSTRY STANDARDS, BY TAKING A RANDOM SAMPLE OF ACTUAL WORK ORDERS ON A MONTHLY BASIS. INCLUDE THE RESULTS OF THESE TESTS AS PART OF MECHANICS' PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS, AS REQUIRED BY DEPARTMENT POLICY.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE PURCHASING DEPARTMENT:

- 00-196 NEGOTIATE, AS PART OF THE RFP PROCESS FOR VEHICLE REPAIRS, STANDARD PRICES FOR STANDARD REPAIRS OR SERVICE, SUCH AS AN OIL CHANGE, VEHICLE LUBRICATION AND SAFETY CHECK. IDEALLY, ONE PRICE SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED WITH ALL VENDORS IN A GIVEN GEOGRAPHIC AREA. AT A MINIMUM, A FLAT PRICE FOR THIS WORK SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED FOR EACH VENDOR, WITH COUNTY DEPARTMENTS DIRECTED TO USE THE LOWEST PRICE VENDOR WHENEVER POSSIBLE WITHOUT DELAYING THE RETURN OF THE VEHICLE TO COUNTY SERVICE.
- 00-197 REVISE CURRENT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR VEHICLE REPAIR SERVICES TO PERMIT MECHANIC PROFICIENCY TO BE CERTIFIED EITHER THROUGH ASE CERTIFICATION OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION OF MECHANIC EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS.

By implementing the recommendations in this section, the Vehicle Services Department would have adequate documentation of its rates for repair services, and would be able to compete for new business from County departments now using private contractors on a competitive basis. By developing mechanic productivity information as described, the department would ensure that repairs are done efficiently, within industry standards. By negotiating flat rates for standard repairs as part of the RFP process, the Purchasing Department would ensure that the County was not overcharged for a given service, and would give departments an easy method to determine which vendors to use for routine service.

FINDINGS – AUTO PARTS INVENTORY

The Vehicle Services Department's vehicle parts inventory is tracked by an on-line inventory system. To ensure the on-line system is accurate, it is supplemented by daily physical counts of high value or high turnover parts, and an annual physical inventory observed by the Auditor/Controller-Recorder. However, data entry errors during the Fiscal Year 1998-99 year-end physical inventory made by contractors hired by the Information Services Department, make the accuracy of that inventory questionable.

As a result, the physical count that was supposed to verify the accuracy of the department's on-line inventory system instead may have introduced

errors into the on-line inventory. Problems with the year-end physical inventory are magnified by the extent to which the inventory interferes with the department's regular functioning.

The Vehicle Services Department and the Auditor/Controller-Recorder should take additional steps to ensure that data entry for the physical inventory is accurate, by ensuring during inventory planning that only qualified staff is used for this work, and by spot checking the work. In addition, the inventory should be scheduled to give Vehicle Services staff maximum time to research inventory discrepancies. To further ensure that the on-line inventory is accurate, and to protect against theft, the Parts Room Manager should randomly select 25 items from its stock each month, comparing the physical inventory to the on-line inventory, researching and correcting any discrepancies. In addition, Auto Shop supervisors should inspect worn parts replaced during all repairs to ensure that replacement did in fact occur.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE AUDITOR/CONTROLLER-RECORDER'S OFFICE:

00-198 ENSURE THAT COMPUTER DATA ENTRY ON THE ANNUAL PHYSICAL INVENTORY IS ACCURATE, BY MAKING SURE DATA ENTRY STAFF IS QUALIFIED, AND BY SPOT-CHECKING THEIR WORK. METHODS TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN AN ADVANCE INVENTORY PLANNING PROCESS BETWEEN THE THREE DEPARTMENTS PRIOR TO EACH YEAR'S INVENTORY.

00-199 EXPEDITE THE ANNUAL PHYSICAL INVENTORY TO BE COMPLETED OVER A WEEKEND, IN ORDER TO DISRUPT THE REGULAR FUNCTIONS OF THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

00-200 ESTABLISH A MONTHLY SYSTEM OF SELECTING A RANDOM SAMPLE OF 25 ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT'S ON-LINE INVENTORY AND CHECKING ON-LINE INVENTORY LEVELS AGAINST A PHYSICAL COUNT OF THE ITEMS, AND RESEARCHING AND CORRECTING ANY DISCREPANCIES.

00-201 ESTABLISH A SYSTEM WHEREBY THE AUTO SHOP SUPERVISOR EXAMINES ALL WORN PARTS REPLACED DURING REPAIRS, TO VERIFY THAT REPLACEMENT WAS NEEDED AND PROVIDE A CONTROL AGAINST PARTS THEFT.

By adopting the recommendations of this section, the Vehicle Services Department and the Auditor/Controller-Recorder's Office will have greater assurance that the annual physical inventory is conducted properly, with minimal disruption to regular functions of the Vehicle Services Department. The Vehicle Services Department will also have greater assurances that its on-line inventory is accurate, and will provide additional measures to protect against parts theft.

FINDINGS – MOTOR POOL REPLACEMENT AND MANAGEMENT

The Vehicle Services Department (VSD) is responsible to maintain the Motor Pool fleet and to replace Motor Pool vehicles. However, VSD does not have the authority to review the justification for a vehicle or to transfer vehicles between departments in order to equalize maintenance costs and mileage. VSD does not have written procedures specifying how it will go about the process of replacing vehicles each year. The primary criteria that VSD uses to determine whether a vehicle should be replaced is if the vehicle has earned replacement fees (excluding inflation replacement fees) greater than the original purchase price. VSD does not consistently consider the maintenance costs and mileage of all vehicles to determine the optimum vehicles to be replaced each year. Of 238 vehicles being replaced in FY 1999-00, 57 vehicles have relatively low maintenance costs and mileage when compared to other Motor Pool vehicles. Our analysis found 175 vehicles with higher maintenance costs and mileage than the 57 vehicles identified to be replaced. In addition, our analysis found that approximately 27 percent of the Motor Pool fleet is driven less than 500 miles per month. An additional 43 percent of the fleet is driven less than 1,000 miles per month.

The Vehicle Services Department should develop a basis for vehicle replacement in addition to the replacement fees earned by each vehicle, such as the vehicle's mileage and maintenance costs. Furthermore, VSD should be given broader authority over the entire Motor Pool fleet, including the ability to review requests for new vehicles, continued justification for current vehicles and the transfer of vehicles between departments. Using this authority, VSD should review the justification for low mileage vehicles and determine the appropriate fleet size to meet the County's needs. These steps will ensure

that the Motor Pool fleet is of the optimal size, and that mileage and maintenance costs are equalized over all vehicles in the fleet. In addition, vehicles with higher maintenance costs and mileage will be replaced sooner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

00-202 REVISIONS TO THE VEHICLE SERVICES COMMITTEE TO ALLOW THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO REVIEW AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON: 1) USER DEPARTMENT JUSTIFICATION FOR NEW VEHICLES; 2) THE CURRENT NUMBER OF VEHICLES NEEDED FOR EACH DEPARTMENT, AND; 3) THE NEED TO TRANSFER VEHICLES BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE DIRECTOR OF VEHICLE SERVICES:

00-203 DEVELOP A MULTI-YEAR PLAN FOR APPROVAL OF THE VEHICLE SERVICES COMMITTEE TO PRIORITIZE VEHICLES FOR REPLACEMENT IN THE MOTOR POOL FLEET. THIS PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE ISSUES IN ADDITION TO THE REPLACEMENT FEES EARNED, SUCH AS CONSIDERATION OF MILEAGE LEVELS AND MAINTENANCE COSTS. ADDITIONALLY, THIS PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE THE APPROPRIATE REPLACEMENT CYCLE FOR VEHICLES EVEN IF THAT VEHICLE IS NOT EARNING REPLACEMENT FEES. ALTERNATIVELY, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO CHARGING USER DEPARTMENTS THE ACTUAL MAINTENANCE COSTS FOR THESE VEHICLES, RATHER THAN THE CURRENT AVERAGE RATE PER MILE.

00-204 REVIEW USER DEPARTMENT JUSTIFICATIONS FOR ALL VEHICLES IN THE MOTOR POOL AND RECOMMEND TO THE VEHICLE SERVICES COMMITTEE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF VEHICLES PER DEPARTMENT. IN ADDITION, TO EQUALIZE THE MILEAGE DRIVEN PER VEHICLE, THIS REPORT SHOULD CONSIDER THE TRANSFER OF VEHICLES BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS AND THE SIZE OF THE LOANER FLEET. THIS WOULD ENSURE THAT THE MILEAGE AND CONDITION OF VEHICLES ARE SIMILAR AT THE END OF THE REPLACEMENT CYCLE.

The implementation of these recommendations will result in an optimal size for the Motor Pool and ensure that vehicle maintenance costs and mileage are equalized throughout the fleet. In addition, implementation of these

recommendations will ensure that the replacement policy is cost effective by ensuring that vehicles with higher maintenance costs and mileage will be replaced sooner.

FINDINGS – GASOLINE AND CREDIT CARD USAGE

The Vehicle Services Department (VSD) is responsible to oversee the efficient operation of Motor Pool vehicles, including the issuance and oversight of gasoline credit cards and management of Countywide fueling stations. A review of this function found that County policy relating to use of credit cards is not being followed. User departments are not submitting all credit card slips to VSD. Therefore, VSD cannot accurately verify payments for credit card gasoline purchases before they are made or properly monitor credit card usage. Additionally, VSD does not spot check purchases for indiscriminate use, as required by County policy. Further, the current VSD process for issuing fuel credit cards and for making payments related to purchases on those cards lacks adequate internal controls.

The Vehicle Services Department should enforce County policy and departmental procedures related to the use and issuance of fuel credit cards, and implement appropriate sanctions for departments that do not comply with the policy. Finally, internal controls in this area should be strengthened. Implementing these recommendations will ensure that credit card transactions are appropriate, and that payments made for these purchases are proper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

00-205 REQUIRE THAT THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY, PUBLIC DEFENDER AND PROBATION DEPARTMENTS PROVIDE THE REQUIRED ODOMETER READINGS WHEN DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES FUEL THEIR VEHICLES.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE DIRECTOR OF VEHICLE SERVICES:

00-206 RE-EVALUATE THE CREDIT CARD PROGRAM IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF CARDS OUTSTANDING, WITH CONSIDERATION TOWARD REDUCING THE NUMBER OF CREDIT CARDS BY ISSUING THEM AT THE DEPARTMENT LEVEL. FURTHER, APPROPRIATE

PROCEDURES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED TO CONTROL THESE CARDS AT THE DEPARTMENT LEVEL.

- 00-207 SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE VEHICLE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON DEPARTMENTS THAT ARE NOT COMPLYING WITH DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CREDIT CARDS, AND DEVELOP A POLICY FOR SANCTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE.
- 00-208 IMPLEMENT A MILEAGE AUDIT PROGRAM THAT WOULD GIVE THE COUNTY FURTHER VERIFICATION THAT FUEL IS BEING APPROPRIATELY USED FOR COUNTY PURPOSES.
- 00-209 UPDATE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT STANDARD PROCEDURE 3-07 TO REFLECT THE CURRENT CREDIT CARD PROGRAM, AND CHANGE THE PROCEDURE TO INCORPORATE A SIGNATURE CARD SYSTEM TO ENSURE THAT CREDIT CARD APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FROM THE DEPARTMENTS ARE APPROVED BY APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL.
- 00-210 DISCONTINUE THE USE OF STATION CREDIT CARDS BECAUSE OF THE INHERENT LACK OF CONTROL OVER WHO IS USING THESE CARDS.
- 00-211 DEVELOP A PROCEDURE TO COMPLY WITH THE COUNTY STANDARD PRACTICE 12-04SP REQUIREMENT THAT CREDIT CARD PURCHASES ARE SPOT-CHECKED FOR INDISCRIMINATE USE, INCLUDING A REVIEW FOR TRANSACTIONS ON CANCELED CREDIT CARDS, A PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE FREQUENCY AND VOLUME OF CREDIT CARD PURCHASES ON INDIVIDUAL CARDS, AND A METHODOLOGY TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTIONS TO RESOLVE ANY ISSUES IDENTIFIED.
- 00-212 DEVELOP PROCEDURES SO THAT STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ISSUANCE AND CANCELLATION OF CREDIT CARDS ARE SEPARATE FROM STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PAYMENT PROCESS FOR CREDIT CARDS TO INCREASE INTERNAL CONTROLS IN THIS AREA.

Implementation of these recommendations will give further verification that County fuel is being appropriately used for County purposes and will ensure that credit card transactions are appropriate, and that payments made for these purchases are proper.

FINDINGS – VEHICLE SERVICES COMPUTER SYSTEM

The current VSD computer system is comprised of a number of independent systems that provide the department's information needs. The current system is in need of replacement as it relies upon old technology that is difficult to maintain and lacks the ability to provide ad-hoc reporting. There are also current manual processes that need to be automated. Replacement of the VSD computer system is critical for the department to ensure that it has the ability to efficiently and effectively manage its staff and the Motor Pool. According to VSD staff the department has accumulated approximately \$250,000 over the last two years for the replacement of its computer system. However, while the department has recognized the need to upgrade its computer system, it has not taken sufficient steps to begin this replacement in a timely manner.

VSD should coordinate with the Information Services Department (ISD) the completion of a requirement study to determine its information needs. This study would document the various business processes of the department and the most efficient way to perform these functions. Based upon this study, VSD should decide if a packaged system will meet its information needs or if ISD should develop a new computer system.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

00-213 COMPLETE A REQUIREMENT STUDY FOR A NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM. BASED UPON THIS STUDY DETERMINE IF A PACKAGED SYSTEM SHOULD BE USED TO MEET THE VEHICLE SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S NEEDS, OR HAVE THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT DEVELOP THE SYSTEM.

The implementation of a requirement study will ensure that VSD goes forward in the most cost and time effective manner in the development of a new computer system.