

GRAND JURY COUNTY OF YOLO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YOLO COUNTY GRAND JURY COMPLETES ITS 2010 – 2011 REPORTING

The Yolo County Grand Jury completed its 2010 – 2011 term with the release of two more reports today. The Grand Jury considered 33 citizen complaints and initiated five investigations on its own, often following up on prior year Grand Jury reports. The Grand Jury completed twelve reports this term. This year's reports include six devoted to County operations, three covering municipalities, two related to school districts, and one on a public utilities district. Two reports in particular received broad interest: Winters Joint Unified School District, concerning open meeting violations and the illegal award of a consulting contract, and Woodland Fire Department Emergency Fees, concerning the public policy and financial flaws in the City's recouping money from insurance companies for services already paid by property taxes.

Today's reports concern (1) errors made but rectified at Yolo High School concerning its site council and (2) unsubstantiated allegations of timesheet and hiring irregularities at Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services.

Yolo High School in West Sacramento was required to empanel a site council, composed of teacher, school employee, parent and student advisors, to advise it when applying for certain State and Federal funding. The funding application for the 2009 – 2010 school year inaccurately indicated the site council was appropriately empaneled. Upon learning of the inaccuracy in the application, Washington Unified School District, which governs Yolo High School, ensured that Yolo High correct the error. Yolo High School correctly elected its site council and successfully re-filed the funding application in May 2010.

The Department of Employment and Social Services investigation addressed unresolved concerns from last year regarding allegations of timekeeping and hiring irregularities. The Grand Jury found no evidence of misreporting or misuse of time by DESS employees and no evidence of alterations in management job descriptions that would compromise hiring standards. The Grand Jury found, however, the potential for fraud in the current timekeeping system and suggested steps to reduce the opportunity for this occurring.

The Yolo County Grand Jury functions as a citizen 'watchdog' organization to review the operations and performance of county and city governments, school districts, and special districts. Based on these assessments, the Grand Jury publishes its findings and may recommend constructive action to improve the quality and effectiveness of local government. Given the necessary staff reductions in county government due to budget limitations, the 'watchdog' role of the Grand Jury becomes increasingly important as an aid to county government leadership in identifying operational strengths and weaknesses.

The public can access the full Yolo County Grand Jury Report for 2010 – 2011, containing the 12 reports for this year and responses by agencies to the Jury's investigations, at the Grand Jury website: <http://www.yolocounty.org/index.aspx?page=780>.

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