

August 7, 2001

Honorable Terrence Van Oss
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of San Joaquin
Courthouse
222 E. Weber Avenue, Room 303
Stockton, California 95202

Dear Judge Van Oss:

Subject: Response to Grand Jury Final Report, Case No. 1000,
Delta Fire Department

Pursuant to 933.05 of the Penal Code, the Delta Fire District provides the following comment to the Grand Jury Final Report, Case No. 1000 (copy attached), Delta Fire Department. As to the findings and conclusions, the Delta Fire District basically agrees with the findings with the following clarifications:

1. The final report states "This Fire Department has two full-time and one part-time employees are paid minimum wage and receive no other benefits." Salaries for a Captain receives \$7.48 per hour, a Lieutenant \$7.61 per hour, and a Fire Fighter receives \$6.25 per hour. The report is correct that employees receive no other benefits.
2. The report states that there is a dispute between Delta Fire District and the Thornton Fire District in regards to where the boundary lines exist. There was confusion regarding the boundaries between the districts on one emergency call. The district boundaries are on a map and clearly shown. Regarding a better working relationship between Thornton Fire District and Delta Fire District, the Delta Fire District would like to note that the Community Development Director and Acting Fire Chief of the Delta Fire Protection District met with the Fire Chief of the Thornton Fire District and a member of the Thornton Fire District Board of Directors to establish better working relationships and, in fact, the Thornton Fire District and Delta Fire District have jointly responded to a fire and established better working relationships.
3. The Delta Fire District disagrees with the last conclusion, it is correct that the Lodi News Sentinel reported on February 22, 2001, that the Delta Fire District is getting a new rescue truck. The statement goes on to state however it does not appear there is adequate staff to accommodate the growing needs. The Delta Fire District has been saving money for several years in an effort to purchase a new replacement fire engine. These savings and a grant from the

State of California will provide a down payment to purchase a replacement fire engine. The same personnel that are operating the existing engine would operate the replacement engine.

Letter to Judge Van Oss
Grand Jury Response
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Regarding recommendation #1 "That a merger with another department would solve a number of Delta Fire District's problems. Woodbridge Fire District would be a good choice as it now serves as a backup for Delta Fire Department." The Delta Fire Protection District has the following comments: This recommendation requires further analysis. It should be noted that Delta Fire District and Woodbridge Fire District entered into discussions last year, and those discussions were terminated by the Woodbridge Fire District when it was apparent there was a financial gap between the ability of the Delta Fire District to provide funding for services at the same level as currently provided by Woodbridge Fire District. Since that time, the Woodbridge Fire District has agreed to reopen discussions and the County is in the process of determining how funding could be provided to close the existing funding gap. The County has initiated a Fire Facility Fee for the Delta Fire Protection District as one method to close that gap and the 2001-02 Budget has \$250,000 set aside to help fund a new fire station. In addition, the County is looking at other financing methods and this investigation should be completed within the next two months. Once a financing package has been established, it will be presented to the Woodbridge Fire District for their consideration and determination as to whether Woodbridge Fire District will agree to a consolidation of the Delta Fire District and the Woodbridge Fire District.

Regarding recommendation #2, we agree that most of Delta Fire's vehicle calls are on Highway 12 or Interstate 5, one being the state and the other a federal highway. We also agree that the opportunity to request State funds or Interstate Surface Transportation Efficiency Act funds to assist with operating costs should be reviewed and we agree that the Board of Supervisors, acting as the Board of Directors for Delta Fire District, should be the reviewing party. It should be noted that the Delta Fire District has been investigating funding sources, both state and federal, for the last two years. As a result of these investigations, the Delta Fire District has received two grants from the State, one in the amount of \$4,978 for equipment and the other grant in the amount of \$60,733 for equipment and to fund a new replacement engine.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please feel free to contact me at your convenience at 468-3133.

Sincerely,

BEN HULSE,
Director, Community Development
Department/
Fire Chief, Delta Fire Protection District