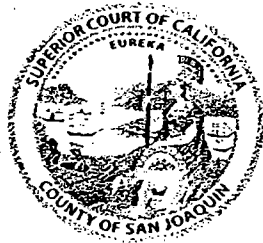


# San Joaquin County Grand Jury



## Review and Investigation of Responses to the 2009/2010 Final Grand Jury Report

Civil grand juries are charged with the mission of acting as the “Watch Dog” of the government for the citizens of the County. The 2009/2010 Grand Jury issued its final report in June 2010, which consisted of 13 individual reports on government agencies, departments, school districts and special districts throughout San Joaquin County.

Each finding in a grand jury report is required to be substantiated by written documents and /or oral testimony. Each recommendation must be supported by at least one finding. A recommendation generally suggests a shortcoming and calls for some change.

For every recommendation in a grand jury report, State law requires at least one organization, agency or official to submit a written response to the Presiding Judge. The grand jury must assure each response was submitted within the timeframe and is compliant with the requirements of the California Penal Code as follows:

**California Penal Code Section 933(c)** *No later than 90 days after the grand jury submits a final report on the operations of any public agency subject to its reviewing authority, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the presiding judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the governing body, and every elected county officer or agency head for which the grand jury has responsibility pursuant to Section 914.1 shall comment within 60 days to the presiding judge of the superior court, with an information copy sent to the board of supervisors, on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of that county officer or agency head and any agency or agencies which that officer or agency head supervises or controls.*

The response must be addressed to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court. Responses were received from all government agencies and officials.

The succeeding grand jury may review the agency’s response and can choose to accept response as is and cease further investigation, or re-investigate, collect further information and re-issue a new report.

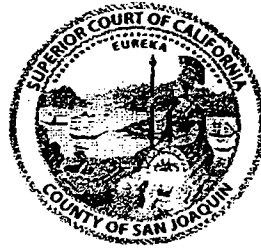
## **Method of Investigation**

When reviewing and evaluating the responses to the 2009/2010 Grand Jury findings and recommendations, the 2010/2011 Grand Jury used the following criteria to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Penal Code Section 933.05(c):

- Response was received within statutory timeframe.
- Respondent indicated agreement with finding, or if there was disagreement or dispute, provided an explanation.
- Recommendation was implemented, a summary of the implementation action was provided, along with evidentiary documentation.
- Recommendation had not been implemented, but was in the process of being implemented, the respondent provided a timeframe for implementation.
- Recommendation required further study or analysis; the respondent provided an explanation of what actions were being taken and a timeframe for the study or analysis to be completed.
- Respondent indicated that the recommendation could not be implemented because of circumstances beyond their control.

The responses to the 2009/2010 Grand Jury's Final Report and the Recommendations and Findings of the 2010/2011 Grand Jury are on the following pages.

# San Joaquin County Grand Jury



## INFORMATION SERVICES

### Follow-Up Report to the

**2009/2010 San Joaquin County Grand Jury Case No. 0609**

### Summary

This report is a follow-up to the investigation conducted and the recommendations made by the 2009/2010 Civil Grand Jury (Case No. 0609). As the internet becomes more prevalent in the daily lives of San Joaquin County citizens, the importance of information accessibility and efficiency of document distribution on City websites is a topic of importance. Each city in our County maintains a website offering a multitude of information and documents.

2010/2011 Grand Jury conducted a follow-up investigation to determine the amount of progress made in addressing the prior year's recommendations.

### Background

A city government's website is an extension of city hall and it is the digital presence that a city maintains on the World Wide Web. City government websites are a public entity primarily funded by taxpayers. Proper implementation and management of the site is an obligation of the city. By creating and continuing to evolve policy, management and fiscal responsibility of the city website, city officials will ensure that helpful information and relevant documents will be available to residents and businesses in an efficient manner.

An investigation was conducted by requesting and reviewing relevant documentation from each city in our County. Requested documents were analytical software reports, website policy and budget documents.

### Method of Follow-Up Investigation

The 2010/2011 Grand Jury reviewed responses to findings and recommendations, interviewed city personnel and reviewed various websites.

## **City of Escalon**

### **Recommendations from the 2009/2010 Final Report**

- R1. Cities implement analytical software for their websites and monitor the reports generated.
- R2. Cities draft and institute a policy to govern the city website's external content. This policy must be revisited annually to make changes due to market conditions.
- R3. Cities implement a specific line item in the annual budget proposal that addresses maintenance, upkeep and future upgrades of city website.
- R4. Cities implement an annual review of each department represented on the city website that includes a departmental evaluation of their documents and the relevance to the users of the city government website.

### **Discussion, Findings and Recommendations from the 2010/2011 Grand Jury**

The City of Escalon plans to launch a new website on May 1, 2011 and will use Word Press which has tracking capability. All department heads have been trained on how to update their own department's web pages.

The new policy to govern the city website's external content is not in place at this time, but should be implemented by the end of the 2011 fiscal year. All new external links are on hold until policy is finalized.

The City of Escalon added a line item for the website to the 2010 budget.

The City of Escalon is currently working on a policy for a quarterly review by department of the content and relevance to users of the city government website.

- F1. A policy for annual review of each department represented on the city website is being developed.**
- R1. Conduct annual review by department for website content and relevance.**

**Please see Response Requirements**

## **City of Lathrop**

### **Recommendations from the 2009/2010 Final Report**

- R1. Cities implement analytical software for their websites and monitor the reports generated.
- R2. Cities draft and institute a policy to govern the city website's external content. This policy must be revisited annually to make changes due to market conditions.
- R3. Cities implement a specific line item in the annual budget proposal that addresses maintenance, upkeep and future upgrades of city website.

- R4. Cities implement an annual review of each department represented on the city website that includes a departmental evaluation of their documents and the relevance to the users of the city government website.

### **Discussions and Conclusions from the 2010/2011 Grand Jury**

The City of Lathrop launched a new website as of December 2010, which uses the free Google Analytics software for site reports.

City of Lathrop Policy # 00-26 governs external website content.

The City of Lathrop has implemented the recommendation with the addition of a network security and software maintenance budget line item. The website is part of the maintenance process.

The Lathrop City Manager has appointed a committee which encompasses representation from each department to review website content at least every three months.

**The 2010/2011 Grand Jury requires no further action.**

## **City of Lodi**

### **Recommendations from the 2009/2010 Final Report**

- R1. Cities implement analytical software for their websites and monitor the reports generated.
- R2. Cities draft and institute a policy to govern the city website's external content. This policy must be revisited annually to make changes due to market conditions.
- R3. Cities implement a specific line item in the annual budget proposal that addresses maintenance, upkeep and future upgrades of city website.
- R4. Cities implement an annual review of each department represented on the city website that includes a departmental evaluation of their documents and the relevance to the users of the city government website.

### **Discussions, Findings and Recommendations from the 2010/2011 Grand Jury**

The City of Lodi uses analytical software. The City currently uses the free Google Analytics software for site reports.

The City of Lodi has a website content and external link policy which is reviewed frequently for relevance in a changing world.

The City of Lodi does not maintain a budget line item for the City website. The website is managed by City staff. Other than soft costs associated with staff time, the only hard costs are annual domain renewal of \$250 and citizen complaint module that costs \$1,000 annually. The City of Lodi has nominal website-related costs and adding a discrete budget line would not add value to the budget document.

The City of Lodi does not have such a process. The City of Lodi will consider the most cost and time-effective way to accomplish recommended review and implement the same.

**F1. The City of Lodi does not have a process to review website content.**

**R1. Develop and document a process to evaluate documents and the relevance to users of the website.**

Please see Response Requirements

## **City of Manteca**

### **Recommendations from the 2009/2010 Final Report**

R1. Cities implement analytical software for their websites and monitor the reports generated.

R2. Cities draft and institute a policy to govern the city website's external content. This policy must be revisited annually to make changes due to market conditions.

R3. Cities implement a specific line item in the annual budget proposal that addresses maintenance, upkeep and future upgrades of city website.

R4. Cities implement an annual review of each department represented on the city website that includes a departmental evaluation of their documents and the relevance to the users of the city government website.

### **Discussions, Findings and Recommendations from the 2010/2011 Grand Jury**

The City of Manteca uses analytical software and monitors reports.

The City of Manteca has no formal policy in place, though links to other government agencies and non-profits are allowed. At a later date Manteca will draft a policy pertaining to external web links.

The City of Manteca's website is maintained in house. No specific line item is needed. Manteca budgets for annual web-related maintenance.

The recommendation has not been implemented. The City of Manteca maintains that the content for each department shall be up to each department, provided the general presentation is consistent with the rest of the site. As Manteca moves forward to the SharePoint platform, a workflow process will help control this. Departments should have some autonomy in deciding what content is posted, while formatting should be standardized.

**\* F1. The City of Manteca has no formal policy in place, though links to other government agencies and non-profits are allowed. At a later date Manteca will draft a policy pertaining to external web links.**

**\* R1. Develop and implement policy to govern external website content.**

Please see Response Requirements

## **City of Ripon**

### **Recommendations from the 2009/2010 Final Report**

- R1. Cities implement analytical software for their websites and monitor the reports generated.
- R2. Cities draft and institute a policy to govern the city website's external content. This policy must be revisited annually to make changes due to market conditions.
- R3. Cities implement a specific line item in the annual budget proposal that addresses maintenance, upkeep and future upgrades of city website.
- R4. Cities implement an annual review of each department represented on the city website that includes a departmental evaluation of their documents and the relevance to the users of the city government website.

### **Discussions and Conclusions from the 2010/2011 Grand Jury**

The City of Ripon webmaster currently uses analytical software which provides information and statistics including page-views and frequently accessed pages. The information provided by this software has proven valuable for evaluating which information is most frequently used, and to evaluate the ease-of-use of the City of Ripon website.

The City of Ripon currently has an external-link policy in place. Before being placed on the City of Ripon website, external links are first reviewed by the webmaster, and secondarily by the City Administrator.

The City of Ripon currently monitors website-related expenses closely. The duties of webmaster are performed by a salaried-employee who is also assigned to several other job functions making detailed evaluation of personnel costs difficult. Any software or hardware capital expenses or maintenance costs must be approved by the City Administrator.

The City of Ripon has implemented a policy by which the webmaster will produce a listing of all information and documents pertaining to each specific department and deliver that list to each respective department-head. Upon reviewing the body of information, the department-head will notify the webmaster of information or documents that are no-longer relevant and should be removed, as well as new information that should be included. Annual review will be done in July

**The 2010/2011 Grand Jury requires no further action.**

## **City of Stockton**

### **Recommendations from the 2009/2010 Final Report**

- R1. Cities implement analytical software for their websites and monitor the reports generated.
- R2. Cities draft and institute a policy to govern the city website's external content. This policy must be revisited annually to make changes due to market conditions.

- R3. Cities implement a specific line item in the annual budget proposal that addresses maintenance, upkeep and future upgrades of city website.
- R4. Cities implement an annual review of each department represented on the city website that includes a departmental evaluation of their documents and the relevance to the users of the city government website.

### **Discussions, Findings and Recommendations from the 2010/2011 Grand Jury**

The City of Stockton's new website was launched as of March 31, 2011. It utilizes the free Google Analytics software for site reports.

The City of Stockton links to external websites are indicted and labeled as such at the bottom of each page. A new Document Room site has been implemented that includes forms, brochures, news release, etc. This will enable people that know what they are looking for to go directly to the item. Department pages provide a link to the Document Room.

The City of Stockton maintains a budget line item for the website and has a defined budget account for maintenance and webmaster-type support. Content-specific website costs are born by the departments responsible for the content.

With the implementation of the new website, the expiration of each item will be indicated. An email will be sent to the author to advise the document is about to expire. Page content will be reviewed on at least an annual basis. Documents that have a longer expiration date, i.e., will be reviewed every two years.

A documented written policy is in the process of being written. Once more data is received from Google Analytics on how the site is being utilized by the public the policy will be finalized and published.

A yearly report is being planned that will be provided to the departments allowing them to identify changes that may be desirable to the departmental site maps and the content of their web pages. The City will implement by September 30, 2011.

**F1. A written policy for website management is not in place.**

**R1. Complete written policy for website management.**

**Please see Response Requirements**

### **City of Tracy**

#### **Recommendations from the 2009/2010 Final Report**

- R1. Cities implement analytical software for their websites and monitor the reports generated.
- R2. Cities draft and institute a policy to govern the city website's external content. This policy must be revisited annually to make changes due to market conditions.



- R3. Cities implement a specific line item in the annual budget proposal that addresses maintenance, upkeep and future upgrades of city website.
- R4. Cities implement an annual review of each department represented on the city website that includes a departmental evaluation of their documents and the relevance to the users of the city government website.

### **Discussions and Conclusions from the 2010/2011 Grand Jury**

The City of Tracy uses software (Google Analytic) that can identify how and how much the City's website is being utilized. This information is available for City management to make decisions regarding operation and content on the website.

The City of Tracy currently has a website policy which addresses external links. It can be located at: <http://www.ci.tracy.ca.us/site/>

The City of Tracy is just completing a \$75,000 revamping of the City's website. Per City budgeting practices, this upgrade was budgeted as a Capital Improvement Project. The new website is expected to be launched with the new fiscal year in July. There is no line item at this time in the annual budget, other than the cost of implementation of the new website.

The City of Tracy's new website has all new content and will be updated as time and resources permit.

**The 2010/11 Grand Jury requires no further action.**

### **Conclusion**

The 2010/2011 Grand Jury found that the cities included in this report are aware of the need for websites that are properly managed and fiscally responsible. Several cities have launched new websites. In this time of budget short falls it is imperative that policies be put in place to govern websites in order to best serve the public and help reduce and lower costs. Policies must be reviewed and updates to the websites must be implemented in order to keep information up to date, relevant to the users.

### **Disclaimer**

Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon the specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Sections 911, 924.1(a), and 929). Similarly, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Sections 924.2 and 929).

## **Response Requirements**

California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05 require that specific responses to all findings and recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court by September 20, 2011, from the following entities:

- **Escalon City Council**
- **Lodi City Council**
- **Manteca City Council**
- **Stockton City Council**

**Mail or hand-deliver a hard copy of the response to:**

Hon. Robin Appel, Presiding Judge  
San Joaquin County Superior Court  
222 E. Weber Av., Room 303  
Stockton, CA 95202

**Also, please email the response to Trisa Martinez, Staff Secretary to the Grand Jury, at**

[grandjury@courts.san-joaquin.ca.us](mailto:grandjury@courts.san-joaquin.ca.us)