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GRAND JURY RELEASES REPORT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT SALES OF SURPLUS ASSETS

(Stockton, CA) The 2012-2013 San Joaquin County Grand Jury released a report on local governments' sale of surplus capital assets. Cities and counties are authorized to purchase capital assets such as land, buildings, vehicles, and equipment in order to function efficiently. When public land, buildings, vehicles or equipment are no longer needed by the local government, the governing bodies are responsible for being good stewards of the public's capital assets and getting the best possible return of public funds. Within the cities of Escalon, Lathrop, Lodi, Ripon, Stockton and Tracy and San Joaquin County there are different degrees of control over the disposition of their assets, as well as the extent to which the process is made known to the public. Some public entities are very conscientious, others less so. While some jurisdictions provide detailed pre- and post-sale public information about what and how assets are sold, others provide minimal, if any. Some have clear policies and procedures in place for staff to follow, others have none, or rudimentary guidelines.

Regarding the sale of land, some jurisdictions provide detailed information before the legislative body is requested to take an action. Other jurisdictions provide little information, including if sales are in compliance with State laws. Also, the Grand Jury found that appraisals of land or buildings for sale are not standard procedure, leaving the public in the dark about whether the sale price is the best value for the citizens.

In an effort to promote public transparency and consistency when disposing of the capital assets, the Grand Jury recommends procedures be adopted by the local governments that are clear, consistent and will provide the public with relevant information on the disposal process, as well as end the result

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A copy of the Report can be accessed by visiting: <http://www.stocktoncourt.org/grandjury/>