



**The Superior Court**  
COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN  
222 E. WEBER AVENUE, ROOM 303  
STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA 95202

TELEPHONE  
(209) 468-2827  
WEBSITE  
[www.stocktoncourt.org](http://www.stocktoncourt.org)

Contact: Gary L. Spaugh, Grand Jury Foreperson  
(209) 468-3855 or (209) 468-2959  
[grandjury@sjcourts.org](mailto:grandjury@sjcourts.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JUNE 17, 2013

· · NEWS RELEASE · · NEWS RELEASE · ·

## **2012-2013 Grand Jury Releases Final Report**

The San Joaquin County 2012-2013 Grand Jury today released its Final Report which includes reports regarding new investigations, informational reports, observations and reviews of various law enforcement agencies visited within the County, and Tours and Presentations that have not been previously released. A brief summary of these reports not previously released follows:

### **New Investigations:**

#### **The San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors**

An investigation by the Grand Jury into the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors' agenda process and the County's website resulted in recommendations that would promote greater public participation and discussion at the Board meetings and a more user friendly website. The Grand Jury initiated this investigation in order to ensure that the public interest and involvement in the Board's deliberations and decision making process is maintained at a level ensuring an effective and transparent democratic government.

It was discovered that a large number of agenda items were on the consent (non public discussion) portion of the agenda and descriptions of some agenda items were incomplete on the website. During the course of the investigation, the Grand Jury found the Board and its staff open to improvements.

#### **Law and Justice**

Grand Juries are mandated to tour and inquire into the detention facilities of the State of California, County of San Joaquin, and Cities within the County per California Penal Code Section 919 (b).

The State of California has three institutions within San Joaquin County: Deuel Vocational Institution for adult males and two facilities for juvenile males, O.H. Close and N.A. Chaderjian (Northern California Youth Center).

The County has three detention facilities: the San Joaquin County Jail, the Juvenile Detention Center, and a medical custody facility at the San Joaquin General Hospital. In addition, the County has temporary detention facilities at the San Joaquin County Superior Court and the Superior Court facility in Manteca. Finally, each city police department has jail facilities or other temporary detention facilities. The Grand Jury visited all detention facilities located within the county.

The Grand Jury is reporting findings and recommendations for the following detention facilities: The Deuel Vocational Institution, Northern California Youth Center (O.H. Close and N.A. Chaderjian), and temporary detention facilities. Property rooms for the Sheriff's Department and all city police departments were visited and a report written with findings and recommendations is included in this report. The Grand Jury participated in 30 ride alongs with public safety agencies, totaling more than 250 hours, with nine different agencies.

### **Informational Reports:**

#### **San Joaquin County Water Supply**

"Never drink the water here." That is what local newspaper articles have reported, indicating in some rural areas of San Joaquin County, the water supply from privately owned water wells is unsafe for public consumption. More importantly, notification to customers of high level of arsenic in groundwater wells in two cities within the County and total Trihalometane indicated unsafe drinking water. The Grand Jury reviewed the inspection reports of five drinking water treatment plants and toured the plant facilities to address the question: "is our drinking water safe?"

The Grand Jury conducted interviews, reviewed water quality reports by the State of California and local entities, and concluded that the major public water systems of San Joaquin County provide safe drinking water.

#### **Special Districts in San Joaquin County**

In 2000, California's Little Hoover Commission found that the State's independent special districts "often lack the kind of oversight and citizen involvement necessary to promote their efficient operation and evolution." This continues to be the case among the many of San Joaquin County's wide-ranging special districts thirteen years later. In 2013, more than 20% of the districts did not have current contact information on file with appropriate County agencies. Taxes persist and fees continue to be collected, with or without financial justification. Districts exist merely to contract services to another district and administrative redundancy is often the norm.

The quality of services each special district provides is monitored by County, State and/or Federal agencies; this is not the case with the daily operation of the special districts or the actions of their boards. The sheer number of these special districts prevents any one entity from this task. What is the answer? Is a State-wide commission needed? Probably not, but can citizens, elected officials, appointees to special districts, and district constituencies work effectively together with appropriate State officials to address the concepts brought forth by the Little Hoover Commission? Is the *status quo* good enough or can we improve? Are we willing to let special districts continue to be the *Great Unwatched*?

#### **2012-2013 Tours and Presentations**

The reports by the 2012-2013 San Joaquin County Grand Jury only reveal a portion of the thousands of hours the jury worked. In order to better understand the workings of different governmental agencies, the Grand Jury embarked on an educational quest to learn as much as possible about the County. The Grand Jury toured nine different programs/facilities. In addition, 10 presentations were made to the Grand Jury during the course of the year service. Some tours are mandated by law, while others were selected to further the understanding of how selected agencies or institutions function. Tours conducted by committees as part of an investigation are not listed in this report. The presentations were all at the request of the Grand

Jury. The Grand Jury sincerely appreciates the time these agencies spent telling their story and answering the questions by the Grand Jury.

**Previously Released Grand Jury Reports**

The following reports by the 2012-2013 Grand Jury have already been released to the public:

- *Recovering from Stockton's Financial Sinkhole – Don't Fall Back In*
- *Getting Rid of Stuff – Improving Disposal of City and County Surplus Public Assets*
- *Fractured Oversight Fails to Serve At-Risk Youth*
- *County's "Most Wanted" - Delinquent Property Taxes*
- *Crime - Budget Cuts + AB 109 ≠ Safe Communities*
- *District Board Ignores the People's Right to be Informed*
- *Review and Investigations of Responses to the 2011-2012 Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations*

####

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