

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

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To: Board of Supervisors
From: Birgitta Corsello, County Administrator
Date: September 6, 2013
Subject: Biweekly Update of Significant Issues

1. County Administrator's Update on Contracts

The County Administrator did not sign any contracts of significance since the last Significant Issues update.

2. Update on Skunk Activity in Residential Areas

This summer the County received a number of inquiries regarding the presence of skunks in or near residential areas. The skunk sightings are a result of the skunks becoming more active in the summer, increasing the likelihood for potential encounters with residents. In response to these inquiries the County used a collaborative approach working with Board of Supervisors, County Administrator's Office, Resource Management Environmental Health Services Division, Agriculture Commissioner, the Sheriff's Office Animal Control Division and the residents to minimize the presence of skunks.

While skunks are typically associated with rural areas, they may be found in every community in Solano County, including suburbs and cities. Although skunks can be beneficial by eating rodents and insects, their presence brings the potential for an unplanned encounter with residents. Skunks are mild mannered, but are wild animals and may carry diseases, so contact with skunks should be avoided.

The County, in order to ensure the health and safety of residents, tested several skunks for rabies and all tests results were negative. The County prepared an informational brochure regarding skunks that contains general information to help reduce the likelihood of attracting skunks to property, and to inform residents of actions that can be taken should someone encounter a skunk.

Additional information on skunks can be found on-line at www.solanocounty.com/VectorControl — and then scroll down for "skunks."

- Contact: Terry Schmidtbauer, Environmental Health Services Manager, Resource Manager, 784-3308

3. Auditor-Controller Provides Bi-Annual Whistleblower Update

The Auditor-Controller’s Internal Audit Division continues to operate the County’s Whistleblower Program. The program includes a special hotline number (866)384-TIPS and a website for submission of reports. The reports received were reviewed by the Internal Audit Division in cooperation with department heads and the County Administrator as deemed appropriate.

From January 1, 2013 through June 30, 2013, the Whistleblower Program received 32 reports of perceived incidence of fraud, waste and abuse, or violations of County policy or law. This represents the highest total of complaints for any period since program inception in September 2008.

Reports were received in the following categories:

- violations of Law/County policy (11)
- timesheet fraud (1)
- welfare fraud (10)
- waste of County funds (3)
- other (7)

Of the 32 cases:

- Eighteen were found to not have merit.
- Four cases were referred to outside agencies and were closed under the whistleblower program without a determination of merit or no merit.
- Two cases remain open with investigations in progress.
- Eight were substantiated and found to have merit.

Details about the eight cases found to have merit follow:

<i>Complaint Allegation</i>	<i>Resolution</i>
A citizen identified PG&E dumping dirt in an open field in rural Vacaville. There was question regarding the proper authorization for the dump and possibility of contaminated dirt.	Resource Management Public Works section investigated the complaint and confirmed the dump was illegal. PG&E removed the dirt from the area.
A citizen identified a hazardous condition regarding a makeshift memorial in rural Vallejo with broken glass, etc. It was believed the memorial was for a gang-related person and the citizen felt concern for his safety if he cleaned it up himself.	Resource Management Public Works section sent out an employee who cleaned up the site.
A citizen identified an abandoned home in unincorporated Vacaville with unsecured access to a pool with stagnating water creating a breeding habitat for mosquitos.	Resource Management Code Compliance Officer contacted the owner of the property who repaired the pool fence to secure pool access. Solano County Mosquito Abatement District sent out an employee who confirmed the existence of mosquito larva and treated the pool water.

<p>Two complaints (two cases) were related to the same entity:</p> <p>Employees of a Health & Social Services contractor reported the contractor incorrectly billed the County for personnel costs.</p>	<p>The Internal Audit Division investigated and found employee timekeeping documents did not agree to personnel costs billed to County on contract invoices. The Internal Audit Division recommended the contractor claim only actual time worked on contracts and maintain time studies to support the personnel costs billed to the County. The contractor agreed to repay the County any funds owed as a result of incorrect billings.</p>
<p>Ten cases were referred to the H&SS Special Investigations Bureau (SIB) for investigation into alleged welfare fraud. Three of those cases were found to have merit.</p>	<p>The SIB took appropriate corrective action as prescribed by their directives related to instances of confirmed welfare fraud.</p>

The Whistleblower Program continues to demonstrate success in the identification of County-related matters in potential fraud, waste and abuse. The Program continues to improve controls, and oversight throughout the County. The Whistleblower Program is a successful addition to the County's efforts to ensure accountability by providing a process for employees and other County citizens to report perceived incidence of fraud, waste and abuse.

- Contact: Simona Padilla-Scholtens, Auditor-Controller, 784-6287