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Wheatland Police Department

Summary:

The Yuba County Grand Jury has a responsibility to the citizens of Yuba County to report on all aspects of county government. The Wheatland Police Department (WPD) is located at 207 Main Street in Wheatland, California, 15 miles southeast of Marysville, California in rural Yuba County. The department currently has eight full time officers, including the Chief of Police and a full time administrative clerk.

Introduction and background:

The Grand Jury visited the WPD in January of 2014 to get a general overview of the police department and how it relates to the city of Wheatland. The Grand Jury last reported on the WPD in 2007.

Discussion and Narrative:

The Yuba County Grand Jury toured the newest home for the WPD; a triple wide portable building was purchased from the Wheatland School District in 2013. These newer offices afford the WPD more space to include: male and female locker rooms with showers, a substantially larger evidence room, officer work stations, an administrative office, a conference room, and additional space to be used for expansion when funds become available.

To ensure clarity and transparency of the department, the Chief of Police has asked for, and received, an audit by outside agencies of evidence stored from previous years. This includes the disposal of narcotics and firearms. The implementation of this policy is an ongoing process.

The City of Wheatland is expected to experience dramatic growth. The addition of three new housing subdivisions to be located within the area of Wheatland (projected growth of 25,000 to 30,000 in the next 20 years) will bring a larger tax base to the city in the future. The addition of more officers will be required to meet the demands of public safety. In 2013, one new officer was added to the force and the administrative volunteer has now become a full time paid employee. Currently, no canine officers or reserve officers are employed with the WPD.

Current prisoner realignment (Assembly Bill (AB) 109, dated October 1, 2011) mandates the transfer of some prisoners from State prisons to local jurisdictions. This has impacted the operations of the WPD. It was reported to the Grand Jury that an increase in certain crimes in 2013, including theft, petty thefts and larceny are occurring within the city. Crimes of assault have decreased due to the high visibility of WPD officers.

The addition of more field officers will be needed to offset the current realignment issues and the coming city expansion.

Findings:

- F1. The citizens of Wheatland are well served by the WPD.
- F2. AB 109, prisoner realignment has caused certain crimes to increase within the City of Wheatland.
- F3. The WPD is staffed by dedicated officers and additional officers will be needed for the imminent growth of Wheatland.

Recommendations:

- R1. The Yuba County Grand Jury recommends that the Wheatland City Council continue to support the WPD with adequate funding.
- R2. The Yuba County Grand Jury recommends that WPD staffing levels be maintained at the level commensurate to the expected growth of the community and include the recruitment of canine and reserve officers.

Commendations:

- C1. The Yuba County Grand Jury commends the Chief of Police, the Officers and support staff of the WPD for their dedication to duty, citizens and law enforcement.

Request for Responses:

Pursuant to the California Penal Code (PC) section 933.05 requires that you respond in writing as to the content and format of responses. The California Penal code also mandates the deadline for responses.

- Wheatland City Council

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted in accordance with Penal Code 933(c) and subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

