

OFFICE OF THE
LAKE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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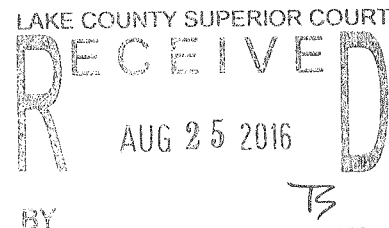
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August 24, 2016

Honorable Andrew Blum
Judge of the Superior Court
255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

RE: 2015-2016 Grand Jury Report
District Attorney's Response to Findings and Recommendations

Honorable Andrew Blum:

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05, the Lake County District Attorney's Office makes the following responses to findings and recommendation in the 2015-2016 Lake County Civil Grand Jury Final Report:

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM REVIEW

Findings:

F-1 The respondent disagrees with this finding. The Victim Witness Program attempted various grant seeking opportunities in recent years. Unfortunately, prior sources of grant money to fund Victim Witness are no longer offered by State or Federal governments or they have scaled back their distributions.

In 2016 the District Attorney's Office failed to obtain a grant applied for due to one agency not willing to commit to a memorandum of understanding that required it to participate in certain data processing and reporting.

F-2 The respondent disagrees with this finding. The VATS system is old and outdated; however, it does serve the current need of Victim Witness. It is not known whether a different system would improve the Victim Witness Division in obtaining future grants.

F-3 The respondent agrees with this finding.


Recommendations:

R-1 The recommendation suggest Lake County continue to provide supplemental funding for the operation of Victim Witness. The Victim Witness Division of the District Attorney's Office is a general fund department. Therefore, the grants supplement the operation of Victim Witness rather than the County. We agree that the County should maintain the necessary funding to ensure the quality of work performed is maintained at the current high level of efficiency.

The recommendation also suggest there should be a goal to lower the funding over a two year period. In the event Victim Witness obtains additional grants than we would agree that general fund money could be reduced. However, if additional grants are not obtained we disagree with the suggestion that the funds received from the general fund should be reduced. It is very important that Victim Witness maintain at least their current status. Victim Witness provides services to victims, witnesses, prosecutors and law enforcement that no other agency can provide. Lowering that service would be a disservice to the community.

R-2 The recommendation has been implemented. The Victim Witness actively participates in seeking grants and does work with County government in applying for grants. In fact, approval is pending on an additional grant applied for and is expected to be received in this fiscal year.

R-3 The recommendation will not be implemented in the near future. VATS is a functioning system that does serve the needs of Victim Witness. Although a newer system could be of some assistance to Victim Witness, comparing the benefit to the costs, a new system is not warranted. The District Attorney's Office is in the process of obtaining a new case management system. This new case management system may have some benefit to Victim Witness.



Don A. Anderson
Lake County District Attorney