

September 11, 2001

The Honorable Judge Rodney Melville, Presiding Judge  
Santa Barbara County Superior Court  
312-C East Cook Street  
Santa Maria, California 93456-5369

**Board of Supervisor's Response to the 2000-01 Grand Jury Report on:  
"County-Wide Data Sharing: Better Ways to Share"**

Dear Judge Melville:

During its regular meeting of September 11, 2001, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following responses as their responses to the finding and recommendations to the findings and recommendations in the 2000-2001 Grand Jury's report on "County-Wide Data Sharing : Better Ways to Share" to which the Board is required to respond. These responses are aligned with those provided by the 17 Affected Agencies.

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**ISSUE I: CONFIDENTIALITY**

**In reference to the boxed statement on Page 4 under the heading: When "Some" Data Isn't Enough, the Probation Department carefully checked their case records and were able to locate a case in which human body parts were involved. However, neither the Probation Department, the Department of Social Services nor Community Care Licensing were able to verify that this defendant was ever licensed for Group or Foster Home operation.**

**Finding 1a: Any information that can be shared through the computer is subject to the same confidentiality laws as information that is exchanged by phone, e-mail, fax, or physical document exchange.**

Agree.

**Finding 1b: Without some type of computerization, much clerical and professional time needs to be committed to facilitate necessary data exchange within the County.**

Agree. Installing and using "computerization" also places significant demands on clerical and professional time. Computerization also requires a specialized staff and infrastructure to maintain and implement this data exchange.

**Finding 1c: All confidentiality laws regarding client information are strictly interpreted and respected by all County Departments. Formal, written agreements to share data between Departments are reviewed by the County Council.**

Disagree partially. All confidentiality laws are strictly interpreted and respected. Some departments' formal written agreements are reviewed by County Council, but some are not. The Public Health Department's MOU's with other County Departments and some of ADMHS's agreements are not reviewed by County Council.

**Recommendation 1a: The County should continue to interpret all client confidentiality laws strictly, regardless of the technology used to communicate it.**

Has been implemented and will continue to be. The following is a summary of implemented actions:

- **Sheriff's Department:** Has implemented through adhering to requirements of Public Records Act, and Section 6254 of the Government Code.
- **Department of Social Services:** Before computer files are shared with another department, the receiving department must sign the department's Statement of Confidentiality form. DSS also has written confidentiality requirements for all its programs.
- **Public Defender:** The Public Defender's Office is bound by the Attorney-Client Privilege as established by the State Bar's rules of Ethics, Statute, and Case Law. The Office strictly and vigorously adheres to all of the rules and laws concerning client confidentiality. The Office does not currently have any data sharing agreements, although we are developing one with the Treasurer/Tax Collector relating to the new Public Defender Fee procedures.
- **Department of Child Support Services:** The Department of Child Support Services closely protects clients' individual rights of privacy and confidentiality of records pursuant to 45CFR §303.21, §307.13, and Family Code §17212. The DCSS currently has a plan of cooperation with the Department of Social Services for the coordination of the common efforts and delineation of the responsibilities of each department. The State of California DCSS requires all Title IV-D Programs within the state to utilize a standardized Plan of Cooperation with the agencies with which data is shared.
- **Public Health:** All of the Public Health Department's formal written agreements (Memorandum of Understanding or MOU's) with other County departments include standard language protecting the confidentiality of patient information no matter how it is transmitted.

The Public Health Department has all of its employees, contractors, and volunteers sign a confidentiality and business agreement as part of the hiring process. Clinic employees receive training on confidentiality at least annually by Risk Management Associates. Risk Management, Associates, a contractor with County General Services to provide malpractice prevention training and defense reviews all of the Public Health Department's confidentiality agreements.

Relevant patient information confidentiality laws include:

1. Code of Federal regulations, Title 42, Volume 1, Parts 1-399 (Drug & Alcohol)
2. California Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 827-830.1, 4514, 5328, 10850, and 18986.4-19896.46
3. California Education Code 49069, 40976, 49602
4. Public Law 104-191 known as the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

The Public Health Department serves as the chair of a County-wide project team to analyze how the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) will impact data sharing. HIPAA calls for standardization of electronic patient health, administrative and financial data and security standards protecting the confidentiality and integrity of "individually identifiable health information" past, present, and future.

**Recommendation 1b: All discussions regarding client Data Sharing should be formalized by written agreements.**

Has been implemented as a matter of departmental prerogative, when deemed necessary to protect confidential information about individuals.

Implemented actions are summarized in the response to Finding 1c. Formalized written agreements are not warranted in all instances of departments sharing client data. For example, the Sheriff's Department shares client data with the Probation Department and the District Attorney's Office without formal agreements in place. Also, the County's major financial applications (FIN, PAY+, Budget Development, Property Tax, and Asset Control) operate under the aegis of the Auditor-Controller in a secured open systems environment that allows for data sharing, and without the need for written agreements.

- **1b, cont'd: A standard MOU should be prepared for use by all Departments.**

Will not be implemented. A standard MOU for use by all Departments may not cover requirements for every department. The MOU's should be specific to the issues present. As previously mentioned, many departments have developed and utilize standard MOU's relevant to their needs. Probation is currently developing a standard MOU for data sharing.

- **1b, cont'd: All Departmental agreements to share data should be reviewed initially and annually by the County Counsel to assure compliance.**

Will not be implemented. Not all agreements to share data need to be in writing. Some departmental agreements, particularly those mandated by the State, do not need to be reviewed by County Counsel. Many agreements, however, are reviewed by County Counsel at the time of the inception and revision. The need for annual review to assure compliance is unfounded. Compliance is a management responsibility that is achieved without ongoing County Counsel oversight.

**Recommendation 1c: Periodically, compliance with the terms of the MOU's or other agreements should be reviewed by the Auditor-Controller or the County's outside auditor.**

Will not be implemented. Compliance is a management responsibility that is achieved without periodic oversight by the Auditor Controller. Internal Audit could perform this compliance function with additional staffing, but the expense is not justifiable. The Auditor-Controller's time, it would appear, is of such value that auditing compliance for the sharing of information by one department to another is not practical. MOU's designed for this type of endeavor are used primarily for legal protection.

## ISSUE II: GRANT SUPPORT

### **Finding 2a: Collaborative efforts between Departments generally provide for a continuum of client service, without redundant and costly program development, benefiting all citizens and taxpayers of the County.**

Partially disagree. Providing "a continuum of client services" is a general goal of many inter-agency efforts. Collaborative efforts are often complex and require significant program development. Many collaborative efforts aim to benefit specific clientele. The Grand Jury report lists examples of collaborative, inter-departmental grants. Additional examples cited by departments are as follows:

**Sheriff's Department:** Mentally ill Offender and Drug Court grants.

**Public Defender:** There are numerous situations where continuum of services to clients may be difficult or there may be potential conflicts. As examples: [1] an individual may be a "defendant" in one matter and a "victim" in another case [2] an individual may be a defendant in a case and a parent in an on-going Juvenile Court Dependency case [3] an individual may be a patient receiving mental health services and a client in a criminal case. With these considerations in mind, wherever possible the Public Defender's Office is actively involved in "collaborative efforts" with other departments and agencies in the county. These involve the Mental Health Treatment Court, Substance Abuse Treatment Court, Proposition 36, Clean and Sober Program, Juvenile Drug Court, Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council, and Domestic Violence Court.

**Probation:** Probation Department participates in collaborative efforts such as MISC, OCAP and Challenge Grants.

**Department of Child Support Services:** As a condition of eligibility under certain conditions, Social Services Clients must be interviewed by the DCSS. Although Social Services and DCSS share many clients, the information needed by each and the mandated forms of each are very different. The DCSS provides staff to interview these clients and have them sign all required forms at the Social Services site. Future information regarding these clients is exchanged through an automated interface.

**Public Health:** The Public Health Department is exploring public-private data sharing in its Proposition 10-funded Welcome Every Baby (WEB) grant and the Care Data Exchange Integration Project grant.

**Auditor-Controller:** We frequently assist departments with the financial management aspects of grants.

**Public Works:** Specific collaborative efforts rarely match the needs of both departments. The recent aerial photometry of the county for use by the Assessor and other departments is useful in a general way, but has no accuracy value in terms of Surveyor use.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** The Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters Department facilitates 'dynamic' sharing of Assessor data with all requesting departments, by providing them with a program module allowing them to view current information in the Assessor's Property System. In addition, the Department has given web-enabled access to all County departments, cities, and special districts to Recorder Grantor/Grantee index, property assessment data, and GIS data.

The main constraint the Department faces in providing sharing support is that sharing requests strain our ability to meet our mandates and meet requests for data. Annually, between January and July, the Department focuses on its mandate with respect to the property tax roll. And during elections season, November and March, 120 days prior to Election Day, the Registrar of Voters is consumed with Election Day planning. As the Map Unit is key to the sharing of data, their support of sharing request creates a backlog. Despite these constraints, the Department still strives to provide support.

**Finding 2b: Santa Barbara County aggressively pursues non-County funded grant opportunities for collaborative, categorical programs.**

Agree.

**Finding 2c: Grant reporting is mandatory and specific. Data collection needs to be error-free and timely. There is more scrutiny of grant reports, and more documentation is now required than in past years for subsequent or continued award of grant monies.**

Agree.

**Finding 2d: Collaborative grants require more formal coordination between County Departments than do block grants, as they attempt a comprehensive solution to a particular social need.**

Agree.

**Recommendation 2: Santa Barbara County should continue to pursue aggressively grant opportunities to increase County services, thereby leveraging taxpayers' dollars.**

Implemented. No significant changes to current practices are planned. It has been the longstanding practice of many departments to pursue grant opportunities to supplement and implement programs and thereby meet community needs and increase the focus and level of services.

### ISSUE III: REDUNDANCY OF DATA COLLECTED

**Finding 3a: The same information is often input about each client in each Department for grant reporting every time the client is seen.**

Partially disagree. Sometimes client data, particularly basic information such as name, age, address, etc. is collected and entered each time the client is seen. However, efforts have been and are being made by Probation, the Sheriff's Office, Public Health, the District Attorney's Office, and other departments to reduce redundant data entry in new systems. For example:

- The Sheriff Department's Mentally ill Offender grant provides for personnel to collect data, which in turn is fed into a data base at UCSB for reporting purposes. Other multi-agency grants have been or are currently handled in a similar manner.
- The Public Health Department is developing a web-enabled Public Health Nursing (PHN) database that integrates: Maternal and Child Health, Homeless, Communicable Disease, Tuberculosis, Lead, and Seniors.
- The Public Works Department generally runs as the lead department in the seeking, implementing and reporting of grant money, and has not had a duplication of this data.
- The District Attorney's Office experience has been that in some grants, there is minimal duplication of data related to identification of client (name, address, dob), with the balance of data entered particular to the role of each agency. In the District Attorney's Office, DAMION is a complex database designed to process our cases in an automated fashion, vs. a 'client' tracking system.

**Finding 3b: There is unnecessary duplication of information input into multiple Departments' data storage, to try to assure that grant reporting is not compromised.**

Agree, but as stated in the response to Finding 3a, in several grants this duplication does not exist. In some instances, multiple copies of the same data are maintained to ensure availability in the event of a disaster or data corruption.

**Finding 3c: If the reported information to the granting agency for client services or clients served is inconsistent between Departments, the granting agency may deny funds.**

Agree; however, no departments are aware of this ever happening.

**Finding 3d: Duplicated information makes data retrieval more cumbersome and time-consuming, and is frustrating to staff. This costs the taxpayers money.**

Agree.

**Recommendation 3: Redundant information should not be collected and entered by County Departments, on a variety of forms, to fulfill the mandates of the funding agencies and the reporting and budget requirements of the County. This duplication wastes computer storage as well as professional and clerical time, makes data retrieval more cumbersome, and costs the County money.**

Will not be implemented. The Grand Jury's recommended implementation action is not clear. The recommendation to not enter information on multiple forms is not generally feasible due to different mandates and required forms, and funding agency mandates and County reporting and budget requirements must all be met. Also, some systems are proprietary and require separate, duplicate

input of existing information. Nevertheless, if specific cost-saving opportunities to reduce wasteful duplication of computer storage and staff time can be identified by the Grand Jury, they will be analyzed.

**Finding 4a: Departments collect identical client data and service information on multiple (paper or computer) forms. Often the same data is collected on three different forms (one for grant reporting, one for the Departmental collaboration, and one for the Department's own internal use) for each contact with the client. Although this makes data input easier, it uses valuable computer and file storage space and makes data retrieval difficult.**

Disagree partially. The finding is generally true, but data retrieval is often easier if data is entered on a multiple-part forms. Departments photocopy forms or use NCR-paper so information is not duplicated. If the software is unfamiliar or the record needs to be easily accessed in hard copy, multiple copies of forms often make sense.

**Finding 4b: If the source person enters the data, instead of the information being passed to a clerk, it leads to increased accuracy and confidentiality. Some of the "line" staff may be doing more work that seems clerical because of this shift in duties, and see this as an extra burden. However, it is a function of the quality of data that the County must now demand.**

Disagree partially. In general, the fewer steps involved in entering data, the greater the accuracy and perhaps the confidentiality of the data. With good procedures, however, there may be instances where data quality risks are insignificant relative to the costs incurred by placing additional clerical tasks on professional staff. There are instances too where this division of labor is beneficent. For example, in the Public Health Department, physicians and other professionals time is used more wisely and cost effectively by writing orders in the chart and having the nurse or aid complete the laboratory requisition or referral to a specialist. Billing documents are reviewed for accuracy and completeness before data entry to make sure that payment is received. It is neither reasonable nor the community standard of practice to have a professional "source person" enter the data instead of aides and clerks.

**Recommendation 4: Discrepancies between the client information used to provide services and for grant reimbursement should be avoided. Data entered into Departments' databases should be manipulated by as few people as possible. Management should find ways to facilitate the data input tasks of line staff to assure the highest degree of accuracy and confidentiality of the stored information.**

Has been implemented. Before implementing a process each department determines the best plan to capture and enter data, and reevaluates that process on a regular basis. Any specific examples that the Grand Jury can provide where this has not occurred will be analyzed further. The following are examples of management facilitating data input tasks:

**Sheriff's Department:** The Mentally ill Offender and Drug Court grants provide for the centralized collection of data through one source which in turn provides this data to USCB for archiving and analysis.

**Department of Social Services:** Eligibility Workers and Social Workers directly enter case information into the Case Data and Child Welfare Services/Case Management Systems.

**Probation:** The IMPACT Case Management System will focus on the efficient collection and entry of accurate information.

**Department of Child Support Services:** DCSS and DSS exchange federally mandated information on mutual clients through an automated interface. Minimal worker input is required to facilitate these interfaces. Additional supplemental information captured by the DCSS is done through the use of interfaces with other state agencies.

**Public Health:** The Public Health Department will be using personal digital assistants (PDAs better known as "palms") for the public health nurses to enter data directly while they are in the field. One of our quality improvement teams last year looked at the Patient Registration process to improve data collection and patient flow. One result is that patient demographic data is now entered only once and then transferred electronically to the clinical laboratory system.

**Auditor-Controller:** Proposition 10 implementation is a good example of streamlining.

**Public Works:** In almost all instances of data collection, Public Works employees enter their own data, meaning, those who know the most about the data are the ones keying it in.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** One of the design requirements of the newly deployed property system was to eliminate the need for additional data entry clerks to enter data into the system that was collected and written on to paper forms by appraisers. Appraisal staff now do their own data entry, eliminating duplication of effort, reducing data entry costs, and reducing potential for error. The new system also enabled Recorder data to be automatically transferred from the Recorder system directly to the Assessor's Property System. This eliminated the need for Assessor staff to re-key data into the Assessor's Property System that was already entered into the Recorder's system.

**Finding 5a: Repetitive data input allows less professional time to be available to client services, lessening employee job satisfaction. Redundant and repetitive data collection also wastes the time of the client.**

Agree. This is a consideration in the implementation of Recommendation 4.

**Finding 5b: Repetitive data input allows for more mistakes to be made, which requires more employees' time to find and rectify the data discrepancies.**

Agree.

**Finding 5c: Discrepancies in client information, which are uncorrected in different Departments' databases, can lead to reporting errors in mandatory grant reports. Errors in grant reports may compromise categorical (grant) funding, which can be costly to the County.**

Agree.

**Finding 5d: In addition to wasting service professionals' time, more clerks are needed as a result of redundant and repetitive data collection. More employees in a Department use more valuable County "real estate."**

Agree.

**Recommendation 5a: Repetitive data input by clerical and especially line staff should be minimized.**

Has been implemented. Opportunities to reduce inefficiencies in data input activities are continually sought out and implemented. Examples are provided in the response to Recommendation 4.

**Recommendation 5b: For Departments partnered in collaborative grants and serving the same client, data should be shared. Apportionment of costs for licensing software and automated access to specific fields of client data, respecting all confidentiality laws, should be established to reduce redundant data collection and data inconsistency that might threaten continued grant funds.**

Will not be implemented. There is no known instance of "data inconsistency" jeopardizing grant funding. A general rule on these matters cannot be applied to all departments. The following examples illustrate the range of issues that defy a strictly uniform approach:

**Sheriff's Department:** Costs for Mentally ill Offender and Drug Court collaborative efforts are provided through grant funding.

**Department of Social Services:** Different mandates require that different data be collected and manipulated differently between programs and departments. One department's regulations may conflict with another, which makes it very difficult to share update responsibility. For example, a simple address change made to a Social Service case by a worker in another department could cause benefits to be sent to the wrong address or discontinued. Regulation requires that the client inform the Social Services Department about changes in living circumstances.

**Public Defender:** There are strict limits on the ability of the Public Defender's Office to engage in client information sharing due to the unique relationship and the attorney-client privilege.

**Probation:** With the implementation of the IMPACT Case Management System, efforts at data sharing have been advanced where possible. Cost sharing of systems is very problematic and has not been implemented.

**Department of Child Support Services:** DCSS and DSS exchange federally mandated information on mutual clients through an automated interface.

**Public Health:** Other than general demographic data, the data required by each department is different and often dictated by the State or federal funding source. Patient confidentiality laws permit that data is shared only on a "need to know" basis.

**Public Works:** The Public Works Department is in a collaborative grant with EHS under the Clean Water Project. The data resides in one area that is shared by both departments. The grant has funded to date all licensing.

**Recommendation 5c: The protocol (responsibility) for shared client information updates should be established by inter-departmental agreement, respecting all confidentiality laws.**

Has been implemented. Relevant examples are as follows:

**Department of Social Services:** Client information within the Case Data System and the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System is updated inter-departmentally. Protocol as to which data and which cases are updated are formalized in written procedures.

**Probation:** The sharing of criminal justice information is encouraged and supported by statute. Confidentiality barriers have been eliminated based on a "right to know" and "need to know" justification. With statutory permission, formal protocols are not required.

**Department of Child Support Services:** The Plan of Cooperation between the Department of Child Support Services and Social Services allows for sharing case status and aid paid data from the Welfare Case Data System. We also have the option of updating client information.

**Public Health:** A confidentiality paragraph is included in a standard inter-departmental Memorandum of Understanding. Some information sharing is State-mandated and, therefore, does not require inter-departmental agreement. This includes Social Services referrals to Public Health for the Child Health Disability Prevention (CHDP) and Women Infants and Children (WIC) programs.

HIPAA will require "Business Partner Agreements" with some departments. The County-wide HIPAA project team is developing agreements to meet these new standards for individually identifiable health information.

**Public Works:** For the above mentioned, as well as most other interagency efforts, Public Works is the lead agency. This allows us to maintain the data in one spot, with no discrepancies. The protocol for each collaborative is worked out in advance of the start of the project.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** A project of the CRA will address this issue with respect to the Recorder, Assessor and Registrar of Voters databases. We hope for a legal opinion on this matter in the next two months.

The Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters Department has agreements with cities, special districts, and County departments (Environmental Health). Data is shared with these agencies for their exclusive use. Only 'public' data is shared.

**Recommendation 5d: Collaborating Departments serving the same client should establish regular discussions to understand their partner's data collections and needs, which may be different than that mandated by the grant.**

Has been implemented. The following are examples of implemented actions:

**Sheriff's Department:** Discussions have occurred prior to grant submission and funding. Data collection techniques were agreed upon prior to implementation.

**Department of Social Services:** DSS engages in regular meetings with partner departments in planning data access and sharing for the new CalWIN system currently in development. DSS has had several meetings and continue to meet with Probation, Child Support, District Attorney's Office, Auditor Controller's office, ADMH, and Public Health regarding data sharing.

**Probation:** The Probation Department addresses this issue with routine meetings among collaborative partners.

**Public Works:** In most instances, the collaborative is formed for a very specific purpose that provides uniform data needs throughout the partnership. Non-specific purposes in a collaborative tend to become complex, and difficult to maintain.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters Department and the County GIS Coordinator that heads the Department's I.S. Division, formed a data sharing sub-committee with members from other County departments to inventory and facilitate sharing of both graphical and textual data and provide a common data storage and access facility within the CAREGIS server.

The Department and County GIS Coordinator has been building data sharing liaisons with the cities and special districts of the County of Santa Barbara over the past six years. In addition to the Department providing its data to these agencies, the department has been successful in acquiring their data for County use, as well.

**Recommendation 5e: The Board of Supervisors should support these important Data Sharing efforts with commensurate, incremental increases in Departments' operating budgets.**

Requires further analysis. If, as the Grand Jury suggests, successful data sharing efforts will result in decreased costs, increased operating budgets may not be justified. If costs are not decreased, and additional resources are required, budget increases would need to be weighed against the expected benefits and other County priorities. This analysis will take place as needed during the budget development process for FY 2002-03.

**Finding 6: There are competitive grants available to encourage Data Sharing in county governments.**

Agree. However, specific grant opportunities currently available for this purpose are not known.

**Recommendation 6a: The County should develop and implement a system of data organization and tracking for grants, and offer tools to Departments for better management of grant coordination.**

Has been implemented. The several departments that receive significant state and federal grants generally have well developed data management systems. The financial aspects of grant needs are being addressed by the Auditor-Controller's office to develop and implement a web-based database application that will facilitate and enhance the County's department-level management of federal, state, and local grants and entitlements.

**Recommendation 6b: The County should pursue aggressively Data Sharing by competing for grant funds to support it.**

Has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future as departments become aware of grant opportunities specific to supporting data sharing per se. As data sharing is not an end in itself, but a means for supporting substantive programs, it is already an integral part of many grants the County receives.

**Finding 7a: There is a reasonably good infrastructure for reviewing and approving technology projects with the coordination of iTAC and ISAC (See Appendix D for the iTAC mission statement). However, iTAC members are all busy people with their own jobs and there has been little County monetary support for this effort. The County needs to provide more leadership in this arena, but not more control.**

Disagree partially. The technical support ITAC provides to ISAC has worked fairly well during the first two-plus years ITAC has been in existence. The principal reason that ISAC formed ITAC was to provide ISAC with a wider range of technical advice than it had previously received. The "busy" departmental members of ITAC are the best source of individual department's needs, and resources. Another benefit of iTAC is the opportunity it provides for departmental IT professionals to network with other IT staff and to become more aware of projects and technology that they would not otherwise be aware of. Prior to forming ITAC, ISAC's only regular source of technical advice was the Data Services (now ITS) Director. Still, the "infrastructure for reviewing and approving technology projects" needs to be further formalized and strengthened to ensure that all significant technology projects are reviewed and tracked to the appropriate degree. While the coordination between ISAC and ITAC is "reasonably good," it means little without there being "control" over subjecting projects to ISAC review. That is not to say, however, that ISAC should exercise anything resembling absolute control over IT projects. ISAC is an advisory committee to the County Administrator, with an important role of providing assistance (particularly through ITAC) in fostering the success of projects. A good balance has been achieved between the correct amount of "monitoring" by a central organization versus "freedom" by departments, which are much more knowledgeable about their needs and projects.

Until very recently, support has been provided to ITAC in the form of a Project Manager in General Services assigned to convene and support ITAC. This position, however, has turned over frequently, and the makeup of its other duties has changed. The instability of this position has resulted in less than optimal staff support for ITAC. To achieve greater stability and commitment of resources to support ITAC, the CAO's Project Manager responsible for the County-wide project tracking system has assumed the responsibility for convening ITAC, and will be working with ITAC and ISAC to strengthen project review procedures. In addition, the CAO has retained the expertise of Mr. Rick Schaeffer, a local IT consultant, to assist the Project Manager and ITAC.

We disagree that ITAC participation is somehow outside of members' "own jobs" and more "monetary support" is needed. Achieving better coordination and mutual support among departments within the County's highly decentralized IT environment is an essential part of all IT professionals' jobs. Membership in ITAC and ISAC is not "compulsory".

**Finding 7b: The County Information Officer position in the context of a Data Sharing initiative, could be responsible to ensure that the County Administrator's needs were met, namely, that (a) a repository is available for data that is to be stored, (b) a common format is adhered to in data that is to be shared, and (c) process studies and data sharing discussions are regularly undertaken in all Departments.**

Agree. A CIO could provide professional leadership to meet not only the County Administrator's needs, but also the needs of the entire organization. Given, however, the decentralized County structure, a CIO would not necessarily ensure organization-wide conformance on matters that are department prerogatives. Several months ago ISAC considered and generally supported a new CIO

position to provide County-wide strategic leadership in information technology. The idea was not pursued because of the lack of authority that such a position would have, the expense of the position, and the anticipated difficulties of recruiting candidates for the position.

Regarding "the County Administrator's needs", having a centralized repository of data is not necessarily the proper course of action for all county efforts. In many cases, providing share points to access individual databases can be more efficient and cost effective. A single repository would be logistically difficult and very expensive.

**Finding 7c: Other potential responsibilities of a County Information Officer, if believed to be necessary under a Data Sharing initiative, could include**

- 1. implementing the decisions arrived at in the iTAC committee,**
- 2. providing forms, queries, and reports requested by the County Administrator, Departments, and the public (for public data),**
- 3. administering MOU's and acting as an arbiter in data sharing issues,**
- 4. coordinating or assisting in the coordination of all types of data for all types of purposes between Departments, and between the County and the public,**
- 5. representing the "data sharing" initiative whenever IT projects are proposed by Departments or by ITS (Information Technology Services, the division of General Services that supports the network),**
- 6. acting as the champion for data sharing efforts and assisting in determining that technologies that lend themselves to data sharing are embraced (such as Web-enabling), and**
- 7. acting as a resource to the Board of Supervisors, which currently has no technical resource available for data/information gathering for its critical decision making processes.**

Partially disagree. ITAC is not a decision-making committee; it is advisory to the ISAC. Also, the statement that "the Board of Supervisors...currently has no technical resource available for data/information gathering for its critical decision making processes" is incorrect. Such technical resources reside in General Services' ITS Division, and in virtually all of the County's departments. The Board is further served by one of its Members sitting on ISAC. It should be noted that without a staff this position could only pay lip service to the workload this list of responsibilities represents.

**Recommendation 7a: A central person or group should be identified to coordinate the analysis of data sharing within the County. The County's iTAC committee (ISAC Technology Advisory Counsel) could provide leadership.**

Has been implemented. ISAC's Charter describes that ISAC's mission is to "provide fully integrated corporate information management systems which maximize access to information in a cost effective manner while meeting corporate, departmental and public needs." One of ISAC's chief goals is to "[e]nhance utilization of data as a shared, consistently derived, corporate resource." ITAC, in its advisory role to ISAC also serves as a central coordinating body.

The data inventory to be undertaken as part of the Data Warehouse Project is a crucial first step in analyzing County-wide data sharing. The annual update to each department's Technology Assessment, which is undertaken by ITAC, will also document existing and potential data sharing opportunities and challenges.

**Recommendation 7b: County leadership should support the iTAC committee's increased functions, with an appropriate budget to the members' IT Departments, thus ensuring that these efforts do not compete with the professionals' responsibilities in the Departments.**

Will not be implemented. ITAC's functions have not been increased. Participating in ITAC is not a responsibility that is incompatible with or should otherwise interfere with other job responsibilities. Moreover, the assignment of IT professionals to ITAC is in the interest of individual departments. The CAO will request the County Personnel Department include ITAC membership as a job responsibility for certain department IT managers. Also, see response to the recommendation embedded in Finding 7a, that "[t]he County needs to provide more leadership in this arena, but not more control," regarding staff support provided to ITAC.

**Finding 8a: Information has been exchanged between Departments for many years to provide appropriate and timely service to County citizens. Confidentiality laws regarding client information have long been respected, and continue to be so.**

Agree.

**Finding 8b: The County-wide network and data access continue to be a valuable mechanism of timely communication needed by the County. However, communication between Departments and the quality and quantity of data exchanged needs to be improved.**

Agree.

**Recommendation 8: The County-wide data system should continue to be supported. However, to assure valuable access to timely information among County Departments, it is no longer sufficient for real data sharing activities that should and could happen. The ITS should continue with the conversion to the higher capacity protocol of Ethernet, which would facilitate data sharing activities.**

Has been implemented. The Strategic Network Upgrade Project is implementing Ethernet, and remains committed to doing so.

**Finding 9: The public would be better served if users were not interrupted during the County's service day by the installation of a technology project.**

Agree. Scheduled downtimes are nearly always during non-business hours. Occasional interruptions during business hours are sometimes unavoidable. At least one department (Public Health) has a performance measure to keep unscheduled down-time to less than one-tenth of one percent (0.1%).

**Recommendation 9: A "flex-schedule" for those IT and ITS professionals responsible for technology installation should be instituted.**

Has been implemented. Examples of recent installations include the Probation and Auditor Ethernet conversions. These installations were accomplished largely during evenings and weekends with minimal disruptions to operations.

ITS heavily uses flex-schedules and overtime to try to minimize the impact of changes to departments. However, since many critical County systems require 7x24 availability, new systems and network upgrades are being increasingly designed for continuous availability.

IT staff in many departments typically either adjust schedules or routinely work off hours, weekends, and general non-business hours in order to maintain and improve data systems.

**Finding 10: A County-wide e-mail service medium is invaluable, disseminating County information quickly, efficiently, and economically.**

Agree.

**Recommendation 10: "GroupWise," the County-wide e-mail service, should be changed to include those Departments not presently included, especially the Sheriff's Department. Efforts should take place expeditiously to combine all County e-mail service into the most efficient system.**

Has been implemented. All departments can receive and send email County-wide. A project to convert the Groupwise email system to a Windows 2000 based exchange system is scheduled to begin during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2001.

**Finding 11: The Auditor-Controller's FIN (Financial Information Network) System, the Assessor's Property System, and the Planning and Development Department's Acella Permit System currently provide inter-departmental access to these Departments' systems.**

Agree.

**Recommendation 11: The County should continue to look for opportunities, using the various technologies available today, to provide inter-departmental access to Departments' systems or to bridge the actual systems together with programmed interfaces.**

Has been implemented. Departments are responsible for their applications, and data sharing between departments is undertaken between responsible departments as needed. The County's ITS Division provides the network infrastructure to facilitate communication between and among departments. Data sharing opportunities will continue to be identified through ITAC's risk assessments of proposed systems, ISAC's deliberations, the ReGIS Project, and the Date Warehouse Project.

**Finding 12a: The decision to pursue any type of technology, whether by data warehousing, Web-based Data Sharing, or any other process, must be based on sound business reasons that further the strategic plan of the County and of the Departments involved. Sound business planning for a joint technology project is achieved by**

- discussion between County professionals, supported by budget allocations,
- involving IT managers at the early stages of any collaborative projects,
- assessing and reviewing these discussions by an arbiter to resolve any impasses and to identify further opportunities, and
- prioritizing technology spending based on needs/benefits analyses.

Partially disagree. Agree that decisions to adopt or not adopt new technologies should be based on sound business reasons. Disagree that the suggested components of "sound business planning" are sufficient or entirely accurate. For example, budget allocations specific to supporting "discussions between County professionals" are not necessary. Such "discussions" are already an integral part of these professionals' job responsibilities. Also, state requirements and the need for County system to be compatible with State-wide systems drive some of the County's significant decisions about technology. Finally, the ITAC/ISAC risk assessment process is a critical element of sound planning on which the County relies.

**Finding 12b: The UCSB Data Warehouse project did not go through the appropriate steps necessary for sound business planning.**

Disagree. The decision to increase the County's sponsorship of UCSB Economic Forecast Project's (EFP) from \$20,000 to \$72,000 was based on sound business planning, and four years of experience working with EFP in producing the County's Strategic Scan presentation. The primary purpose for the increased sponsorship is to obtain greater assistance from EFP in preparing and presenting the County's annual Strategic Scan and periodic updates to the County Strategic Plan. With the increased sponsorship, EFP has committed to dedicating a full time staff person to supplement the partial staff time otherwise provided by EFP's professional staff. The need for this additional resource was based on the cumulative experience from prior years' Scan presentations, and particularly with the addition last year of the Introduction to the Strategic Scan and the identification of strategically critical issue areas.

It is apparent from the Grand Jury's report that this finding is based on several misconceptions about this project. Contrary to what is reported by the Grand Jury:

- There is a "published" project plan in the form of a June 5, 2001 memorandum from Deputy County Administrator Scott Ullery to department heads on the subject "Data Warehouse Project with UCSB Economic Forecast Project (EFP) and Strategic Plan" (see attached);
- The project does not entail committing capital funds to "buying" an actual Data Warehouse through UCSB at a cost that "will total \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 per year;" and
- There will be no "relinquishing management of...data to an outside agency. Participating departments will maintain full control of all their data.

If these and other misconceptions were in fact true, then we could certainly agree with the finding.

With regard to the Grand Jury's four components of sound business planning as listed in finding 12a: 1. Discussions with and support of the County's ReGIS manager, the Auditor-Controller, Budget Director, P&D Director, General Services Director, and Public Health Director did take place; 2. IT Managers from General Services and the ReGIS Manager were involved early; 3. There was no impasse requiring resolution, and 4. The need/benefits of the project were analyzed fully.

**Recommendation 12: Joint technology projects of the County should be carefully planned and formalized, in ISAC and iTAC, to save staff and managerial time in data retrieval for years to come.**

Has been implemented. The bulk of responsibility for carefully planning technology projects is rests with the departments that will be using the new application. All new technology projects of significant size are expected to be brought to ISAC for analysis (with technical assistance from ITAC), and many have been. A formal assessment process has been established and used for this purpose, but not consistently. Departments that have participated in the ITAC/ISAC review process have benefited greatly. There are significant technology projects undertaken that are not reviewed and monitored by ISAC, but probably should be. ISAC can and should rededicate itself to being more involved as recommended. ISAC's effectiveness is predicated to a considerable degree on the cooperation of departments.

**Finding 13a: Relevant information to be included in any joint technology projects is identified only by discussion between Departments. This is a necessary, up-front cost that must be considered and supported to assure relevant, accurate, and timely data for decision making.**

Partially disagree. Discussion among departments is generally necessary, but seldom sufficient to ensure that joint technology projects include relevant information. An integral part of any data sharing project, and the cost of the project, is the identification of the data to be shared and the information to be obtained from the data. The relevance of data is also often a function of State agencies requirements that may be more targeted to reporting than to decision-making requirements.

**Finding 13b: Data users and data contributors to a joint technology project do not perceive identical benefits from the sharing arrangement. This can, at times, create lengthy discussions between Departments that are data users and those Departments that are data contributors. These discussions are inevitable and should be accommodated by the budgets. The lines between these two groups, however, blurs if the sharing arrangement is carefully planned—i.e., data users will become contributors and vice-versa.**

Agree.

**Recommendation 13: Data sharing among Departments, and the discussions that are necessary to identify relevant data and information, should be actively encouraged and supported by the Board of Supervisors. This would assure that, regardless of the technology, appropriate and timely data is delivered to County decision makers in the years to come.**

Has been implemented. The Board of Supervisors actively encourages and supports ISAC and ISAC's goal to "enhance utilization of data as a shared, consistently derived, corporate resource." The Board of Supervisors has also actively encouraged and supported ReGIS and the UCSB Data Warehouse Project, which also promote data sharing. While explicit Board encouragement and support is specifically expressed for instance, it is routine for user-departments to be identified and have their needs considered as systems are designed and installed. ISAC's Technology Assessments program and the Data Warehouse Project may be able to identify where there might be impediments to data sharing, and determine whether the impediments are due to technology or confidentiality claims. It will be important to determine if impediments due to confidentiality claims are a matter of law or department policy, and if the latter, whether the policy is justified. County Counsel will have an important part in the determination of whether or not matters of law are involved. The involvement of the Board of Supervisor's may be necessary to resolve policy matters.

## ISSUE V: COSTS OF DATA SYSTEMS

**Finding 14a: The proposed UCSB Data Warehouse project is redundant to the service that could be provided by ReGIS.**

Disagree partially. The two projects can be complementary, and the County Administrator's office and Clerk-Recorder-Assessor are working together to ensure they are. For example, the ReGIS repository is more than a geographic information system. It is a repository (database) that can hold both graphical and textual data. ReGIS can be used to house the data that is being collected by UCSB, and made available for sharing, as appropriate and as determined by the contributing departments. More work and discussion are necessary to fulfill this capability. Also, the Data Warehouse Project's department-by-department inventory of data is expected to reveal heretofore unknown opportunities for departments to use ReGIS. With more data available through ReGIS, the overall strategic and operational value of ReGIS will increase.

**Finding 14b: The ReGIS initiative and the Data Sharing initiative are complementary.**

Agree. The practice of data sharing and the ReGIS project are complementary. "The Data Sharing Initiative," however, is described by the Grand Jury as "an informal series of discussions and projects. As such, it is unclear exactly how they are complementary. Certainly one data sharing initiative, the Data Warehouse project, is complementary to ReGIS, as described in the response to the previous finding.

**Finding 14c: All County data would need to be reformatted for inclusion in the Data Warehouse, because the format of the County data now collected is significantly different than the needs of the UCSB Data Warehouse project. County data at the UCSB Warehouse will be even less accessible to County service professionals than it is now.**

Disagree partially. Data collected for UCSB (or for ReGIS) will certainly need to be reformatted. The Data Warehouse project will "reformat" County data in the sense that it will aggregate and analyze raw data and present it in a form that provides strategic information to County decision makers. However, there is an opportunity to collect it once, reformat it to a common useable format that can be used by UCSB for forecasting and analysis tasks, as well as storage in ReGIS for County departmental sharing. It is not expected that Departments will have to reformat any data provided to UCSB, nor will departments have to go to the UCSB Data Warehouse Project to retrieve their raw, transactional data. Where the data sets created by UCSB will reside is to be determined, but they will be accessible to County service professionals across all departments.

**Finding 14d: Use of the County-owned ReGIS database for Departmental economic and archival data needs does not have many of the limitations associated with the UCSB Data Warehouse.**

Disagree. The relevant part of the Data Warehouse Project is barely underway as of August 2001, and its "limitations" are not entirely known. The finding assumes that ReGIS and the Data Warehouse are mutually exclusive, competing, and non-complementary projects. That assumption is incorrect.

**Recommendation 14: For archival data needed by the County Administrator and others, the use of the ReGIS database should be considered. The County staff supporting ReGIS should be vested with the authority to pursue data links from other Departments to ensure that the County Administrator has available all of the information, once it is defined, that is promised by the Data Warehouse project.**

Has been implemented (partially). In consulting with the ReGIS coordinator in the early stages of planning the Data Warehouse project, it was agreed that the Data Warehouse project would actively solicit more data for the ReGIS database. County ReGIS staff has full authority to pursue any data for ReGIS, and has engaged in considerable outreach to encourage departments to use ReGIS. The Data Warehouse project will reinforce and supplement that outreach. Not all data developed in the Data Warehouse project will have specific geographic referents.

The CAO and County GIS Coordinator have discussed coordinating visits to departments when gathering data for UCSB, with the goal of achieving an inventory of shareable data. Further discussions with departments and the GIS Data Sharing Subcommittee need to take place once an inventory is achieved, to determine needs, security/privacy issues, technical issues, etc. Due to limited resources (staff and budget), actual implementation may be delayed considerably. The Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters Department ability to meet its mandated missions and support of the Data Warehouse project will require close collaboration on what aspects of the warehouse must be fulfilled first.

**Finding 15a: The capabilities of the ReGIS system and its application to County business are considerable.**

Agree. For example, the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor believes that ReGIS will have significant Government 2 Business (G2B) applications which will stimulate business activity in our county and reduce reporting or compliance costs when doing business with the County. Also, the Public Health Department has a half-time Geographical Information System (GIS) map technician works closely with ReGIS to map sewer systems, vulnerable populations, and origin of animals and patients with communicable diseases.

Other potential users, such as the Department of Child Support Services, which operates a client-based system and operation, will need to conduct further research to determine the potential benefits of ReGIS to their operations.

**Finding 15b: The technical prowess of the County professionals who created ReGIS, and their familiarity with County business are considerable.**

Agree. The competency of the ReGIS staff compares very well with that of the County staff as a whole. Their familiarity with certain aspects of County business, such as the functions of the County Assessor, is considerable. Their knowledge of the full range of County business conducted by Public Health, ADMHS, and many other departments is not considerable, and is not expected to be.

**Recommendation 15: The County should support ReGIS through appropriate budget allocations, and not lose the investment that has been made, both in terms of hardware and the professionals who developed it.**

Has been implemented. The Clerk-Recorder-Assessor's Information Systems Division, which is responsible for ReGIS, continues to be an established cost center in the County's annual budget.

**Finding 16a: The costs associated with the UCSB Data Warehouse project, if pursued, would preclude the full implementation of Data Sharing in the County. Data Sharing and data warehousing provide different types of access to data and differences in the quality of the data.**

Disagree. It is not clear what is meant by "the full implementation of Data Sharing in the County." The Grand Jury states that "Data Sharing" is one of "three initiatives to organize County data" that "began and is continuing with an informal series of discussions and projects among Departments who share clientele." The Data Warehouse project is a data sharing project, and will contribute to other data sharing efforts by initiating a County-wide inventory and definition of data. While no estimate has been made of the cost of other data sharing initiatives, it is unlikely that the \$72,000 annual cost of the data warehouse project would preclude their full implementation. Expenditures on the data warehouse project are an investment in County-wide data sharing.

**Finding 16b: Data Sharing and the ReGIS initiative are complementary in their access to and quality of data.**

Agree. ReGIS is a data sharing project that provides accessible and good quality data.

**Recommendation 16: Data Sharing should be pursued in combination with the ReGIS initiative to provide the highest quality data in a timely and accessible way to the County.**

Has been implemented. The data warehouse project has begun to identify data sources and data characteristics throughout the County, and is proceeding in concert with the ReGIS project. A product of the both data sharing projects is timely and accessible data.

Ongoing implementation requires further discussions with departments and the GIS Data Sharing Subcommittee to take place once an inventory is achieved, to determine needs, security/privacy issues, technical issues, and implementation strategy. Due to limited resources (staff and budget), actual implementation is slower than may be required by some departments. To achieve departmental data sharing along with the use of ReGIS as a common repository may require more resources than currently available, and will require a formal concerted effort by all interested departments.

**Finding 17a: When County operating resources are limited, the most valuable initiatives, with established benefits, are funded first. If funds remain, other projects, with benefits that can be anticipated, are then funded.**

Agree. County operating resources are allocated according to the policies and priorities established by the Board of Supervisors.

**Finding 17b: The "means" of data sharing need to be considered in the data sharing discussions, because of the costs. The County, as all public and private institutions, prioritizes needs and allocates resources accordingly, since resources are, by definition, scarce.**

Agree.

**Recommendation 17a: The monies that are being considered for a Data Warehouse project allocation in the County should be dedicated to Departmental initiatives to share data, in combination with increased use of the ReGIS initiative.**

Has been implemented. The data warehouse project is expected to contribute to both initiatives to share data and increase the use of ReGIS.

**Recommendation 17b: The County should have a policy of fostering "open" systems (see footnote 2 on page 3) that make data sharing inexpensive and easy.**

Has been implemented. The County's adopted technology of the network and file servers is designed to support open systems. ODBC compliant NT/SQL Server has been the de facto standard for systems development since 1995. The county is in the process of migrating to Windows 2000, which includes the open Web Services and .NET initiatives. Also, ISAC's evaluation criteria for new systems favors open systems. The Sheriff's Department, for example, has deployed open systems, most recently the web enabled Warrants system (WANDA).

**Recommendation 17c: IT managers should be involved at the early stages of virtually all administrative policy and operating discussions.**

Has been implemented. This is the general practice in County departments for policy and operational matters that involve information technology. Whether or not the job scope for IT managers includes involvement in virtually all administrative policy and operating discussions is the prerogative of each department director, to wit:

**Sheriff's Department:** Sheriff's Department Information Technology Managers have direct input into decisions related to administrative, operational, and budgetary issues.

**Department of Social Services:** The IT Manager is a member of the department Management Team and Division Chief's Team where policies and operating discussions are held. The IT Manager or her staff are participants in planning and discussion groups in all levels of the organization.

**ADMHS:** The ADMHS IT manager attends all department managers meetings and makes recommendations regarding all policies which may have an IT impact.

**Probation:** It is the policy of the Probation Department to develop all IT proposals through the Departmental IT Manager. As a member of the Department's administrative team, the IT Manager participates in all discussions regarding administrative policy and direction.

**Department of Child Support Services:** DCSS involves the IT manager in any discussion or decision-making process concerning operating procedures or whenever a decision could impact the system or system utilization in any way.

**Public Health:** The Public Health Department's IT manager serves on the Grant Team and reviews computer needs of all grant applications. The PHD IT manager is a member of the "Cabinet" or divisional managers level decision-making team.

**Personnel:** The Personnel Department does not have an IT Manager.

**Planning & Development:** We have participated in many of the policy discussions for IT in the county. Examples include ITAC, AAC and participation in groups convened by ITS on special projects (new rates, support structure, etc.)

**Public Works:** PW DDP Manager is involved to provide feasibility, analysis, and suggestions for successful, and useful policies from a managerial to operating level.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** Our Department's IT staff are an integral and necessary component of all policy, operational, and business process improvement initiatives.

**Recommendation 17d: To encourage more data sharing, the County should set aside funding, apart from current operating budgets, for worthy data sharing projects for which the Departments could compete. This would encourage more data sharing and accelerate the process of improving County data communication.**

Will not be implemented. Collaborative rather than competitive data sharing is already being fostered. To set one department against another in competition for funding is antithetical to the concept of data sharing. All county budgets are established within the policy guidelines and principles of the Board of Supervisors.

Data sharing proposals should generally be encouraged, and each proposal should be evaluated on its merits. Achieving meaningful data sharing will likely require more than "set(ting) aside funding...for which the Departments could compete." Legal, institutional, technological, and other impediments to data sharing need to be understood and addressed. Also, data sharing projects will have a greater likelihood of success if they are based on collaborative efforts rather than competition. The Data Warehouse Project and IT Assessments will reveal a number of opportunities and impediments to data sharing, and is thereby an important step toward identifying worthy data sharing projects and encouraging more data sharing.

**Finding 18a: Management responsiveness is an important factor in retaining good staff. Included in managerial responsiveness is user training of County employees, which is relatively inexpensive and available.**

Agree. Training programs, however, are not inexpensive. The Employee University was established to meet some of the County's training needs at an affordable price (most Employee University classes are only \$50 each.) The County's IT functions are largely decentralized to the departments, and the allocation of limited resources to IT training is largely a departmental prerogative.

**Finding 18b: Despite the published information, not all Department managers are cognizant of the advantages of both the technical and organizational training available through the Employees University. Some do not actively encourage their staffs to avail themselves of these pertinent opportunities.**

Disagree partially. There are probably some managers not aware of EU training programs, but information about EU programs is distributed widely and frequently throughout the organization. The EU has developed a consistent and recognizable schedule format and continues to develop new courses as well as enhance existing ones. Enrollments have been increasing and more outreach is planned through its Marketing Committee. Also, the EU has been offering a 2-day Supervisors' Institute not only to train Supervisors but also to introduce them to the value of having their staff enroll in EU courses. Enrollments are increasing. The EU offered 3 additional Institutes over the summer months to accommodate the waiting list for this training.

Many departments do actively encourage their staffs to participate in EU training, to wit:

**Treasurer-Tax Collector:** The Treasurer-Tax Collector does encourage all types of training. This is reflected in our departmental training log; over 2750 hours of training were provided to about 60 employees in fiscal year 2000-01 (an average of over 40 hours per employee).

**Sheriff's Department:** The Sheriff's Department actively supports the Employee University.

**Department of Social Services:** Social Service is one of the most active users of the EU. A member of the IT Division is currently serving as an EU trainer and an EU Council Member.

**ADMHS:** EU training opportunities are widely encouraged throughout the department.

**Probation:** The Probation Department strongly encourages staff training including participation in EU programs when applicable.

**Department of Child Support Services:** DCSS encourages all employees to take advantage of the training offered by EU.

**Public Health:** All Public Health Department managers and supervisors are aware of Employee University training programs. Staff are routinely encouraged to take classes as one of the Employee Performance Review work objectives.

**Planning & Development:** P&D has a training program that has goals for each position. Progress is evaluated annually in every employee's EPR.

**Public Works:** PW actively encourages a continuing professional development for its entire staff.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** Our Department is keenly aware of the EU offerings and its value. We actively encourage employees to achieve personal, professional, and departmental goals by attending appropriate EU courses. Specific EU courses are often suggested in individual EPR's (Employee Performance Reviews).

**Finding 18c: For security of the data sharing, and the efficiency of all users, training should occur prior to any inter-departmental access of data.**

Agree.

**Recommendation 18a: Considering the costs of hiring individuals in the open market, user training in technology tools should always be considered and budgeted for as part of the system development/acquisition cycle. The County should pay for this important technical training.**

Has been implemented. System development and acquisition projects always include user training as a budgeted component of the projects. A recent example is the Probation Department's IMPACT Case Management System, for which technical training has been and will continue to be a very significant part. During Fiscal Year 2000/01 approximately \$7000 was expended for technical training.

**Recommendation 18b: A dedicated 1% of each IT Department's budget (for an annual County cost of approximately \$120,000) should be allocated to IT managers to provide training and user support for current IT professionals. An additional 1% should be allocated to provide training and support for employees of the Departments. This should be an incremental budget item and should not be at the expense of other Departmental services or funds.**

Will not be implemented. Training requirements vary by department and over time. Training requirements for each department are best determined by management and executives within the department and included in each department's budget. The source of additional funding ("incremental" or otherwise) for any purpose must be identified. The following is a summary of some departments' IT training expenditures:

**General Services:** ITS spent about \$100,000 in FY 00-01 and have increased to about \$120,000 in FY 01-02.

**Treasurer-Tax Collector:** The Treasurer-Tax Collector budgeted \$87,000 in the general fund and \$40,000 in the retirement fund for employee training. This is about 1% of the general fund budget and greater than 1% for retirement.

**Sheriff's Department:** Sheriff's Department for IT - \$18,000.

**Department of Social Services:** Social Services spent approximately \$28,000 for technical training in fiscal year 00/01 and plans to spend \$39,000 in 01/02.

**ADMHS:** Departments not funded by the general fund may have special budgetary considerations which conflict with this kind of commitment.

**Public Defender:** The Public Defender's Office has a budget of \$16,500 pursuant to the MOU between the County and the attorneys which provides an entitlement to each attorney of \$500.00 to be used for training or educational books/publications. There is no specific budget for IT training.

**Department of Child Support Services:** DCSS is part of four county Consortium - Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, and Fresno, for the planning, development, operation and maintenance of the STAR/KIDS Automated System. The Consortium is not only responsible for the maintenance of the core System application code it is also responsible for providing the necessary levels of technical and user support - including training - to member Counties.

**Public Health:** The Public Health Department Fiscal Year 2001-02 budget has 0.87% of the total IT budget dedicated to training of its current IT professionals (\$18,100 training /\$2,070,291 IT budget).

**Planning & Development:** IT training varies on projects in the department. Varies from 5-15K per year (including GIS Training).

**Public Works:** PW currently has \$10,000 for 5 positions, up \$2,500 from last year.

**Recommendation 18c: The Employees University should pursue an alliance with SBCC to offer a broader range of specialized technical courses. The EU should organize and act as fiscal agent for inter-departmental technical courses provided by outside vendors at the request of the Departments involved.**

Will not be implemented. ITS already performs this role. Specialized technical training is not the mission of the EU. The EU, however, has an on-going alliance with both Allan Hancock College and SBCC and is collaborating on computer training to be provided at its joint use facility on the Calle Real Campus in south county and computer classrooms run by AHC in north county. The EU has assisted departments in researching specialized training for computer applications and made referrals. The EU does not have a mechanism in place to act as fiscal agent for courses provided by vendors. While EU offers "Just In Time" customized classes for subjects like MS Project, the EU will not implement specialized technical classes for ITS staff at this time. This is currently being done by ITS.

**Finding 19a: Department process studies in the Probation Department are an important operational advancement in County data management. Process studies give the baseline (for costs associated with employee time) to compare with whatever incremental cost is involved in the Department becoming fully "data-linked."**

Partially Disagree. Process studies are commonly undertaken when planning and developing new IT applications. The Probation Department's use of process engineering software has advanced its capability to conduct process studies.

Process studies were very helpful to Probation in planning and assessing departmental needs in advance of drawing up the project specifications for the IMPACT Case Management System. The study, however, did not isolate costs by function as implied in the Finding.

**Finding 19b: Departments that do not employ Systems Analysts, but hire outside vendors to implement isolated systems, or purchase off-the-shelf solutions without proper review, may lose the opportunity to make this valuable comparison of incremental costs of any new technology.**

Agree, but vendor systems that have been developed for multiple governmental sites may provide solutions that would not have otherwise been considered. In addition the costs and time frame required to develop in-house solutions may far exceed the cost of off-the-shelf solutions, because the product can be offered to multiple agencies. Moreover the cost of continuing enhancements can be shared among users, which is a considerable savings over time.

Whether designed in-house, or by outside vendors and designers, systems adopted without proper review can result in lost opportunities.

**Finding 19c: At times, there can be problems with the reluctance of some Departments to share data, even though it is legal for them to do so. Some may cite spurious confidentiality issues if they feel that their data may reflect poorly on their Department.**

Disagree partially. There may be some departments reluctant to share data, but there may well be reasons other than "spurious confidentiality" claims or fear of looking bad.

Data sharing often raises legitimate confidentiality concerns, which need to be addressed through various security measures. Departments may be unable to share data easily because of increased costs of system development; systems supplied or mandated by the State or other agencies, and other reasons, to wit:

**Sheriff's Department:** Costs associated with vendor licensing requirements, especially in light of the increases tied to relational data base vendors, provide impediments to sharing.

**General Services:** Other reasons may include: increased costs of system development; systems supplied or mandated by the State or other agencies.

**Probation:** There are some cases in which confidentiality claims are in question. However, these differences are usually based on reasonable disagreements relating to statutes and not a fear that data may reflect poorly on a department.

**Department of Child Support Services:** In addition to the confidentiality mandates found in 45CFR §303.21, §307.13, and Family Code §17212, Child Support Services is part of a multi-county consortium which is totally responsible for the maintenance of the core System application code. All reports and interfaces must be approved and written by the consortium management group. Additionally, funding for such activities would need to part of the consortium's budget, and receive approval of both the State DCSS and the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement as all expenditures are fully reimbursable by the state and other sources.

**Public Works:** Sharing data sometimes results in sharing an unfinished project. It leads quite often to redundant data that may not match the original when the original data set is officially compiled.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** Our Department freely shares data with other departments within the bounds of the State Revenue and Taxation code. We believe all departments freely share data within their legal bounds. We believe that occasionally it may not be clear to others the confidentiality rules that bind the various departments.

**Recommendation 19a: All Departments should undertake a process study, based on the Probation model, as part of the planning process prior to any implementation of technology projects. This data-sharing process should be conducted with clerical and line-staff and should include data survey, IT management conferences, and formalized agreements.**

Will not be implemented. Departments routinely implement process studies as part of technology project planning and prior to all technology implementations. However, they use a model that is appropriate to their business and accepted process improvement industry standards, which may differ from Probation's. The Probation Department model worked very well to meet the needs for a new case management system. The process included a very deep and thorough study of all "business" systems, and it required the participation of a large cross-section of staff within the Probation Department and other agencies with whom they share or receive data. The County and other departments are in the best position to determine if this is the process to be followed.

**Recommendation 19b: All Departments should request their clerical staffs periodically to make lists of the information that is routinely requested of and by other Departments.**

Will not be implemented. Department clerical staff is not the only or best source for this information. Significant information requests are made of and by professional, technical, management, and executive staff. All departments are encouraged to be sensitive to input from all employees when studying process improvements. For example, the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department has formally performed focus group studies involving all clerical staff. The purpose of the studies was to identify data sources and data destinations, and methods to facilitate and improve data handling. The department is structured as such that this discussion can be initiated at any time by any employee.

**Recommendation 19c: All Departments should meet as necessary to discuss what information is needed from one another.**

Has been implemented. The following are a few examples:

**Treasurer-Tax Collector:** The Treasurer-Tax Collector meets with the Auditor and the Assessor to share property data. Retirement meets with the Auditor and Personnel to share data regarding employees. We also meet with user County Departments (Health Care, Probation, Social Services, Public Works, Planning, District Attorney, Public Defender) concerning collection account data (CUBS).

**Sheriff's Department:** Mentally ill Offender, Drug Court, WANDA system, CAD/RMS, and GUS.

**Probation, PHD, DSS, ADMHS and Child Support:** Various combinations of these departments meet on a regular basis:

- ◆ Interagency Policy Council Meeting – 1st Monday each month
- ◆ MISC Cross Agency Managers Meeting – 1st Tuesday each month
- ◆ MISC Deputies Meeting – 1st Thursday each month
- ◆ Fiscal Managers Meeting – as needed
- ◆ CalWIN – as needed

**Public Health:**

- ◆ New Vistas Executive Oversight –monthly
- ◆ Welcome Every Baby (WEB) – weekly (in development)
- ◆ HIPAA – as needed, at least every other month

**Planning & Development:** Shares data permit data with Assessor, EHS, Flood.

**Public Works:** PW meets with other departments for information sharing in both formal (sit down at the table) as well as informal (email requests and queries) settings on a daily basis by staff. These exchanges are much to numerous to even begin to enumerate with any hope of providing a clear picture of scope of process.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** We currently share building permit data from the County Planning Department, the City of Santa Barbara via the Internet, and map updates with cities and special districts.

**Recommendation 19d: Data Processing Managers should meet periodically, as information accrues from other Departments, to evaluate opportunities for operational efficiency.**

Has been implemented. The new Probation system, Payroll system and Purchasing system are some recent examples of how this process has been followed. Also, ITAC and AAC provide an additional forum for regular meetings and information exchange among IT managers. Some additional examples are as follows:

**Treasurer-Tax Collector:** The DP Manager for the Treasurer-Tax Collector meets with DP managers in both the Auditor's and Assessor's offices on a fairly regular basis, to discuss our shared concerns. She also meets with DP Managers in the Departments for which we provide collection services. She regularly attends ITAC meetings.

**Department of Social Services:** The IT Manager periodically meets with the IT Managers from Public Health, ADMH, and Probation. We have met regarding shared or potential projects such as HIPAA, MISC, remote access, recruitment and job classifications, CalWIN, and the new Probation system.

**General Services:** The new Probation system, Payroll system and Purchasing system are some recent examples of how this process has been followed.

**Probation:** The Probation Department IT Manager continues to meet with other departmental IT Managers to discuss information sharing and other areas of mutual interest.

**Public Health:** The Health and Human Services agencies have regular meetings for HIPAA and CalWIN.

**Planning & Development:** GIS tech committee meets regularly for this purpose.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** Our department spent many hours with IT and other management staff from Tax Collector, Auditor, Planning and Development in the design and development of the Assessor's Property System. We intend to make more opportunities for operational efficiencies in the future.

**Recommendation 19e: Technological assessments of specific data sharing should be used to create formalized agreements (MOU, contracts, etc.) between Departments. Legal review of the agreements should be obtained.**

Has been implemented, according to the prerogative of each department as appropriate, to wit:

**Treasurer-Tax Collector:** The Treasurer-Tax Collector has no written agreements or MOU's. We would be willing to use a standard MOU approved by County Counsel.

**Sheriff's Department:** The Sheriff's Department maintains several systems (Subject in Custody Automated Management System – SAM, Criminal Records Management System – RMS, and Warrants System – WANDA) in which we share information with Probation and the

District Attorney. No formal data sharing agreements are in place. Again, these agreements typically are used to protect against erroneous release of information lawsuits.

**Department of Social Services:** Social Services uses the department's Statement of Confidentiality Regarding Release/Access of DSS Computer Data prior to any access being allow to its computer data. The form has been reviewed and approved by County Counsel. Contractors.

**ADMHS:** All of the MISC partners share data every day, and do have formal agreements in place. Currently, however, most of that sharing is not electronic, although projects are in place to proceed in that direction.

**Public Defender:** As mentioned above, the Public Defender's Office is developing a data sharing agreement with the Treasurer/Tax Collector relating to the collection of court ordered attorney fees.

**Probation:** The Probation Department is currently developing agreements with other agencies for data sharing when required.

**Department of Child Support Services:** The Department of Child Support Services and Social Services have a Plan of Cooperation that allows for sharing case status and aid paid data from the Welfare Case Data System. We also have the option of updating client information between the two systems. The MOU is a template provided by the State Department of Child Support Services.

**Public Health:** State mandated data and summary information can be shared without formal agreement.

Client specific data is only shared if individuals who will be using the agreement sign confidentiality agreements. The issue is more than an agreement between Departments, but more important and understanding of the individual employee who has access to the data. Annual training on the confidentiality of client-specific data is performed by the attorney at Risk Management Services in the Public Health Department and Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services.

Confidentiality agreements are reviewed by the attorney at Risk Management Services, not County Counsel.

**Planning & Development:** No formal agreement. We have tried to provide data to any department that makes a request.

**Public Works:** PW has no formal agreements with other Departments at this time.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** Our Department has formal agreements with cities and special districts for reciprocal data sharing. While we have always shared data freely with other County departments we have recently begun to formalize the sharing with written agreements. A GIS Technical Subcommittee is currently working on a standard agreement that can be used by all departments, which can then be reviewed by County Counsel.

**Recommendation 19f: There should be a mediation process to resolve data sharing disputes between Departments when a Department refuses to share allowable data. Perhaps the County Administrator's office, the CIO (should one be hired), or the County Counsel could act as broker to resolve such disputes.**

Has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future if deemed necessary. On the infrequent occasions when serious disputes arise between departments, the County Administrator's Office has a role mediating and resolving disputes. To date, no serious data sharing disputes have been brought forward to the County Administrator. If any such disputes do occur, ISAC will investigate the situation and recommend action by the County Administrator. The following is a sample of what some departments have experienced in this arena:

**Treasurer-Tax Collector:** The Treasurer-Tax Collector is in the process of identifying a shortage of data from the new APS system. Our DP Manager will then request specific additional data.

**Probation, PHD, DSS, ADMHS and Child Support:** Each department routinely shares information when permissible, and are unaware of any data sharing disputes.

**Planning & Development:** We have had some disputes with departments not wanting to participate in the acquisition of data and then requesting access to the data once it was acquired (digital air photos, digital topography). The disputes were as more data was shared and each department felt that they were benefited by sharing.

**Public Works:** PW has no unresolved disputes at this time. Our biggest issues are in the past. They have revolved around offering collaborative projects with requests for fund sharing to other Departments we felt would benefit from the collaborative. Until we had the data in hand, we could not generate interest from the other Departments, at which point the other Departments wanted a copy of the data without helping to offset the cost of the data collection.

**Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Registrar of Voters:** Unaware of any data sharing disputes for data that is "public".

**Finding 20: Web-enabled data access and storage systems can be made to be secure and accessible to all Web-enabled data processing platforms.**

Partially Disagree. No system is totally secure. However, diligent effort can provide degrees of security that are adequate for effective and appropriate for data sharing. Different departments have different security standards. For example, while the Probation Department knows that systems are never 100% secure, they have a great deal of confidence in the security of their browser-based system, which handles highly confidential information.

The Department of Child Support Services seeks the highest level of security feasible, because it is mandated by the federal government to have safeguards on the access to any data concerning IV-D clients. Additionally, their system contains information obtained from the Internal Revenue Service, and there are severe penalties if the level of security is insufficient.

**Recommendation 20: The County should consider Web-enabled data storage and transfer as a necessary adjunct to the WAN. The Web-based and browser-based systems are the wave of the future (meaning the next three to five years).**

Has been implemented. Web-enabled systems are being considered and evaluated. Web enabled systems have been and are being installed, including the District Attorney, Clerk-Recorder-Assessor, Public Health, Special Districts, Probation and Payroll. For optimum efficiency in data sharing, the WAN should continue to be a shared common resource. Departments should be

discouraged from building separate independent networks. Similarly, a shared common authentication directory structure should be encouraged for optimum data sharing.

The Department of Social Services agrees with the Grand Jury recommendation but does not agree that departments should be discouraged from building separate independent networks or that a shared common authentication directory structure should be encouraged for optimum data sharing. DSS believes that each department needs to evaluate its infrastructure in relation to its business requirements. Social Services will evaluate its network infrastructure and authentication schemes in light of its need to share data with State and Consortium systems as well as county systems.

**Finding 21a: Initiatives by the Probation Department to store data in a Web-enabled database and browser-based user interface are to be applauded, because they deliver timely and accurate data for decision-making while being very available to access by others. This serves the Departments, the taxpayers, and the citizens of the County well.**

Agree.

**Finding 21b: The Probation Department is in a good position to provide technical assistance to other Departments considering its important technological and operational advancements.**

Agree, but Probation is not necessarily in any better position to do so than many other departments. The Probation Department is willing to share its experiences in this regard through technical assistance; however, the department is not in a position to provide hands-on assistance to other departments due to staffing limitations.

**Finding 21c: Social Services, in designing its replacement data processing system, is designing it with the potential for client-server data access.**

Agree. The new CalWIN system is a client server and its data structure is relational which will make data sharing easier. The CalWIN consortium is evaluating the feasibility of WEB enabling the Inquiry Only screens to facilitate data sharing. Social Services is encouraging the Consortium to move in this direction.

**Finding 21d: Discussions are underway between the Social Services and Probation Departments to coordinate data and transaction responsibilities that will benefit the provision of services to mutual clients.**

Agree. Both DSS and Probation have had numerous discussions regarding various programs, and they will continue.

**Recommendation 21: Established and emerging expertise in the County in Web-enabled data storage and transfer should be utilized to expand the full potential of operational and technical issues associated with Data Sharing. This would be cost-effective, given the expense of consultants and the benefits of Data Sharing for County service delivery.**

Has been implemented. County staff resources are being used and staff are continuously increasing their skills. The Probation Department is willing to share its experience in this regard. The use of consultants can be cost-effective in the right circumstances.

The Clerk-Recorder-Assessor cautions that web-enabled technology alone does not enforce, ensure, imply, or initiate data sharing. Web-enabled technology should be viewed as one of many important technologies to be embraced in datasharing and other projects.

**Finding 22: The County already has, and is developing additional, Web-enabled databases in many of its Departments. These Web-enabled databases are significant resources that will allow easy access to this valuable archival information, for timely design of County services. The Board of Supervisors can spur more and quicker improvement of County service with appropriate encouragement.**

Agree.

**Recommendation 22a: The County should prioritize more and better utilization of the County-wide Data Processing network, as well as creating Web-enabled databases (Data Sharing) between Departments involved in collaborative grants, in order to improve County service. This will also assure that grant funds, based on service reports to granting agencies, will continue to support County needs.**

Has been implemented. The County as a whole is making use of these technologies. General Services is undertaking a two-year project to migrate the existing Token Ring network infrastructure to a high speed, Switched Ethernet, IP based infrastructure. The project is focused on the infrastructure that switches and routes data traffic within the County WAN environment and to other public and government networks.

**Recommendation 22b: All IT projects of the County should go through needs/cost assessment processes and publish project plans so that priorities are well defined and understood, and so that County planning is comprehensive.**

Has been implemented. Each department is responsible for assessing its needs and planning projects, and most departments routinely perform needs/cost study analysis on all projects and publish plans for projects. All proposed projects with a cost of \$100,000 or more are evaluated by ISAC, with technical assistance from ITAC.

**Recommendation 22c: The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator should direct County Departments to study Data Sharing technology to the optimal feasible extent and to respond before the beginning of the next budget cycle, by January 2002.**

Has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Departments will be requested to provide data sharing activities and plans through the annual IT Assessment process.

The Board of Supervisors thanks the 2000-2001 Grand Jury for its findings and recommendations included in the subject report. The Board of Supervisors appreciates the efforts of the Grand Jury.

Sincerely,

Joni Gray  
Chair, Board of Supervisors

C: William L Cathey, 2000-01 Grand Jury Foreperson