

The 2015 – 2016 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury

For Immediate Release

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News Release

No “Easy Pay” Options for County Parking Citations

Based on a request for an investigation, the 2015 – 2016 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury (Jury) has reviewed the process utilized by the Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Office (SBSO) to collect fines for parking citations. Collections are effected through a contract between the SBSO and a private vendor.

The Jury found several problems with the vendor’s processing of parking citations which affect the public’s ability to make payments in a timely manner. These problems include a lag between the time the SBSO submits the citations to the vendor and the time the vendor posts the citations online. Incorrect late fees are sometimes added. Citations have been incorrectly sent to collections and invoice reconciliations are late. The Jury also noted that, although checks can be sent, there is no option for citizens to pay their citations in person or with cash. Finally, the most recent contract expired in June 2013.

The Jury has written a report on its investigation in which it lists five findings and recommendations. The Sheriff-Coroner has 60 days in which to respond to the Jury’s report.

The Jury’s report, titled “Parking Citation Payment Problems with the Sheriff’s Office”, can be found on its website at www.sbcgj.org.

The Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury is a basic part of government within the judicial branch. The Grand Jury acts independently, yet is under the general control of the Superior Court Presiding Judge to assure that it acts in accordance with the Penal Code of the State of California.

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