

County Ignores Grand Jury

The Sutter County Taxpayers Association is concerned that Sutter County has ignored the 2012-13 Sutter County Grand Jury's recommendations to improve the county's financial management. The grand jury's findings included:

- 1) failure to follow Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)
- 2) lack of an internal auditor
- 3) inconsistent cash handling
- 4) two accounts not audited or reconciled on a routine basis
- 5) inconsistent labor rate calculations
- 6) employees outside the Auditor Controller's office are not familiar with GAAP.

Instead of embracing the grand jury's recommendations, the county's responses were defensive and, for the most part, the recommendations are being dismissed.

The issues identified by the grand jury are issues Auditor Controller Robert Stark has repeatedly brought to the Board of Supervisors and county administration. No members of the board and the county administrative office are CPAs, but they are ignoring recommendations by the elected Auditor Controller, a CPA trained and experienced in budget and financial matters. SCTA believes this is a flagrant continuation of the attitude of non-cooperation with the Auditor Controller's office.

The Grand Jury's findings and Stark's recommendations are backed up by Sutter County's former independent auditor firm, CohnReznick LLP, which resigned its five-year contract in June 2013 out of frustration over being unable to obtain the necessary information from Sutter County departments in a timely manner.

SCTA is concerned that when the Grand Jury, which is the citizens' oversight of government, makes recommendations to government bodies and those recommendations are ignored, there is no force of law to ensure that the recommendations are taken seriously and implemented. We believe the taxpayers of Sutter County want the best financial practices in place to protect our tax dollars. The citizens deserve to know if and when the Board of Supervisors will direct the administration to give the issues raised by the County's duly constituted Grand Jury the attention and respect they deserve.

We request this year's grand jury investigate these issues further.