

SACJUSTICE

KEEPING AN EYE ON SACRAMENTO

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DATE: February 9, 2004

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

FROM: HENRY HARRY
SACJUSTICE

Subject: **LAW ENFORCEMENT BUDGET PROCESS**

“This street has always been like this. People have been selling drugs out here since I was a kid. There aint nothing you can do to change it.”

---arrestee on Gigi Place
Sacramento CA, 2003

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

--- Margaret Mead

During your December 16, 2003 meeting I appeared before the Board and pleaded for the implementation of a specific plan, including funding, to address the out of control crime in the Central Division. Also, I informed the Board that later this spring, I would submit a comprehensive law enforcement improvement plan. Part of this plan enhances the current budget process by giving citizens, and perhaps this Board, greater oversight of the precious public funds used in each of the Sheriff's Department's patrol services divisions.

As always, law enforcement is the chief concern of citizens. In the face of budget deficits, this Board is preparing to submit a tax package, and or packages, to citizens. If citizens are asked to pay more for basic law enforcement protection, then this Board must use its power to assure citizens their money is being spent wisely and most efficiently. This Board has the duty and political ability to require the Sheriff to explain his goals and specify his plans to spend public money to improve public safety.

The Sheriff, like other top administrators, is in the process of developing a budget for 2004 - 2005. I submit this portion of my plan now, so it will give the Board time to negotiate its implementation for budget year 2004 - 2005. We cannot afford to relive the last ten years of failed crime and drug control policies in the Central Division.

This plan calls for the following:

Each patrol Division Commander will announce and meet with citizens no later than April 1, 2004 to discuss in great detail the division's proposed budget, and its full impact on the division's ability to reduce, control, and prevent crime. The Division Commander will answer reasonable questions from the public and the press regarding the budget. The informative detailed budget information, now supplied to department administrators, will be available for public viewing at individual division stationhouses and on the Sheriff's Department website, barring mission sensitive information.

Citizens should be encouraged to attend subsequent budget workshops when the Sheriff submits his official 2004 - 2005 budget request to the Board.

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At the conclusion of the budget process, a copy of the adopted Sheriff's Department budget for each patrol division will be made available for public viewing at the division's stationhouse and on the Sheriff's Department website. Any funds allocated to a division which are subsequently transferred out of the division shall be immediately documented and made available for public viewing at the division's stationhouse. The Division Commander shall publish a report on all additions and subtractions of money to the division's budget for each fiscal year. The report shall be available on the Sheriff's Department's website.

The detailed information and reporting requested under this plan will in no way unduly burden Sheriff's Department staff. The information already exists on their computers. Posting the information to the department's website is a minor task for skilled staffers who are already paid to post information to the department's website.

The precedent for this level of reporting currently exists in the relationship between the citizens of Elk Grove and the Sheriff's Department. The contract between Elk Grove and the Sheriff's Department (paragraph 14, page 7) requires the department to report on "significant staffing issues." The people of Elk Grove have a mechanism to assure funds allocated for Elk Grove are tracked and used in Elk Grove. This oversight mechanism appears to be lacking for unincorporated residents. The Sheriff's Department survives this process with Elk Grove and will survive the process with county residents.

Attached is an example of Elk Grove's detailed law enforcement budget for 2002 – 2003. Elk Grove's budgets are available on their website. Please note the understandability and level of detailed information available to Elk Grove citizens for their home computer. This type of detailed budget information placed on the Sheriff's Department website will help citizens with their duty to hold government accountable. Suspicious growth or shrinkage in any budget category, or transfers of money which may have a significant impact on public safety in a division will catch the watchful eyes of diligent citizens.

In these tough budget times, we all, including leaders, must adapt to the changes which are necessary to make us better. I believe it is crucial in our society that law enforcement move forward with a new openness and willingness to include the public they serve in the process of governance.

I look forward to working with this Board to improve the delivery of law enforcement services in the Central Division and throughout the county.

Thank you.

Henry Harry
SACJUSTICE 02-09-2004