

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

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To: Board of Supervisors
From: Birgitta Corsello, County Administrator
Date: March 18, 2013
Subject: Biweekly Update of Significant Issues

1. County Administrator's Update on Contracts

The County Administrator signed the following contracts of significance since the last Significant Issues update:

- Registrar of Voters, a contract with Advanced Ballot Solutions (effective March 4, 2013 to March 4, 2018) to lease two ballot-on-demand printers, for a total of \$36,350.

2. Farmbudsman Selected to Serve Solano and Yolo Counties

On January 15, 2013, the Boards of Supervisors in Solano and Yolo counties adopted a joint operating agreement with the Solano Community College Small Business Development Center to establish a farmbudsman program that serves both jurisdictions by assisting farmers, ranchers and agriculture-related businesses with various permitting processes, including assistance with agricultural permitting and standards as required by regulatory agencies. The program's objective is to facilitate and expedite the development of promising value-added agricultural projects and was a key opportunity identified in the Solano and Yolo Counties Joint Economic Summit in November 2011 to accomplish that objective.

A solicitation for the position was advertised on January 24, 2013 in the Davis Enterprise, Vacaville Reporter and Daily Republic as well as distributed through various agriculture-focused organizations, including the farm bureaus in both counties, Solano Grown and the Yolo County Ag Futures Alliance. The initial deadline for applications of February 5, 2013 was extended to February 18, 2013. A total of 10 applicants were received.

The Farmbudsman Oversight Committee selected Michelle Stephens to serve as the farmbudsman and work as a consultant through the Small Business Development Center. The Solano College Board of Trustees is scheduled to consider the personal services contract at its meeting on March 20, 2013.

Ms. Stephens has a blend of economic development and agriculture experience, including researching and writing a user-friendly manual that presents Yolo County codes and permit processes in plain English. Her most recent position is program manager at the California Association of Local Economic Development. Starting April 15, she can be reached for farmbudsman-related services at (707) 864-3382.

Services provided will be tracked based on the county benefitting from the farmbudsman program, and will be reimbursed at a consultant rate consistent with other services provided at the Small Business Development Center (\$50 per hour). Per the operating agreement, each county has committed \$27,000 per fiscal year to the farmbudsman program through FY2015/16.

- Contact: Stephen Pierce, Public Communications Officer, 784-6122

3. WIB Hosts “Spotlight Session” on Employment Services for Veterans

On Tuesday, February 19, 2013, the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) of Solano County held a North Bay Employment Connection (NBEC) staff training and development “Spotlight Session” on employment services provided to veterans at the Main Library in downtown Napa from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The attendees included 42 staff members from the North Bay Employment Connection (NBEC) collaborative, which is made up of the WIBs in Napa, Lake, Marin, Solano and Sonoma counties, and the State Employment Development Department (EDD).

The intent of the session was to bring together staff to learn more about the wide array of employment-related services available to veterans, and to share best-practices between those who have had more experience in this arena. As a result of this spotlight session, staff was able to go back to their respective counties and implement some new ideas and approaches.

Presentations included Department of Labor Region VI Veterans Employment and Training Services Administration, State EDD-Administered Veterans Programs, Solano County Veterans Services, Travis Air Force Base Transitions Services, and Solano County WIB Local Best Practices.

- Contact: Robert Bloom, Workforce Investment Board, 863-3501

4. County Whistleblower Report for July-December 2012

The Auditor-Controller’s Internal Audit Division continues to operate the County Whistleblower Program. The program includes a special hotline number (866)384-TIPS and a website for submission of reports. The reports received were reviewed by the Internal Audit Division of the Auditor-Controller’s Office in cooperation with department heads and the County Administrator as deemed appropriate.

From July 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012, the Whistleblower Program received 14 reports of perceived incidence of fraud, waste and abuse, or violations of policy or law. Reports were received in the following categories:

- violations of law/County policy (4)
- timesheet fraud (1)
- welfare fraud (2)
- waste of County funds (2)
- other (5)

Eight of the cases were found to not have merit. The two welfare fraud cases were referred to the H&SS Special Investigations Bureau for further investigation into alleged welfare fraud and were found to have merit.

The following four cases were found to have merit:

<i>Complaint Allegation</i>	<i>Resolution</i>
A supervisory employee was abusing the overtime system by taking all the overtime for herself and denying other employees the opportunity to earn overtime.	The supervisory employee was instructed to share overtime with all qualified employees who were willing to work when overtime was needed.
A County contract was mismanaged. Delay in execution of the contract resulted in a loss of \$60,000 in incentive funds to the County.	The employee who managed the contract resigned from the County. The department head has implemented improved management controls to improve accountability in future projects.
An employee was wasting work time by watching videos at his desk when he should have been working.	Employee counseled by supervisor on his inappropriate use of time. Employee agreed to cease watching videos at his desk during work hours.
An employee was reviewing the work of employees that were direct relatives of the employee in violation of the County personal relationship policy.	Policies were changed to require employees to excuse themselves from reviewing the work of employees to whom they are related.

The Whistleblower Program continues to demonstrate success in the identification of County-related matters in potential fraud, waste and abuse. The Program continues to improve controls, and oversight throughout the County. The Whistleblower Program is a successful addition to the County's efforts to ensure accountability by providing a process for employees and other County citizens to report perceived incidence of fraud, waste and abuse.

- Contract: Simona Padilla-Scholtens, Auditor-Controller, 784-6287

5. Update on County's Use of ICLEI Services

Solano County joined ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in 2009, primarily for the purpose of using the ICLEI protocol and its staff/technical assistance in conducting a greenhouse gas inventory for the Solano County Climate Action Plan (CAP). The ICLEI protocol was the industry standard at the time and was the best way for the County to do the inventory. ICLEI remains the industry standard.

ICLEI staff provided the County with technical expertise and advice on how and where to obtain necessary data. Though the consultant AECOM did most of the analysis work for the CAP, ICLEI was kept in the loop and provided some guidance during the process.

ICLEI's primary purpose is to provide assistance to local governments relating to all forms of sustainable development and planning. The majority of cities and counties in the Bay Area are members, including other Solano County agencies (Benicia, Dixon and Fairfield). ICLEI provides skills training to agency staff in the form of conferences and webinars to share information, legislative updates, and best practices. Staff recently participated in an online webinar sponsored by ICLEI on solar development issues in the state. The ICLEI network is also a good tool for researching what other cities and counties are doing relating to sustainable development and issues.

Staff believes that Solano County should remain a member of ICLEI for the following reasons:

- Provides an excellent resource for assistance in matters relating to various kinds of sustainable and energy efficient development. Resources include conferences, webinars, legislative updates, and white paper issue summaries.
- ICLEI is one of the largest networks of local governments that deals specifically with sustainability issues (wind power, solar power, waste diversion, green buildings, LEED development, greenhouse gas emissions and associated impacts, etc.), and its primary purpose is to serve those local governments.
- Membership marries easily with the County's General Plan, which provides policies striving for sustainable, energy efficient, and green growth moving forward, both in community development and in its own government facilities.
- Membership is consistent with the County's efforts to be a Bay Area leader in energy efficient and "smart" development.
- Nominal membership costs of \$2,750 per year.
- Contact: Bill Emlen, Director of Resource Management, 784-6062