

PLACER COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Complaint 2001B-14

Discussion

As a part of the above referenced complaint the Grand Jury investigated the ease with which the public can obtain information about the Placer County Government and its operations. The Grand Jury found that in the last year Placer County has made improvements in making information available to the general public. These improvements are due mostly to the Placer County Government web page (www.placer.ca.gov). Since its inception the web page has increased the information available to the public. Currently the web page has the following types of information available: County Departments; County Services; the Placer County Code; Calendars; and Board of Supervisor information such as field offices, names and telephone numbers of supervisors, summary actions of the Board of Supervisors, committee assignments, and staff to the Board of Supervisors.

However, with regard to other means of distributing information to the public there needs to be improvement. Currently the primary means of getting information to the public is the brochure entitled "A Citizen's Guide to Services Provided by the County of Placer 2001". This brochure adequately describes services to the citizens of the County. However, it does little to educate citizens as to how they can participate in their government.

Another weakness the Grand Jury found was the lack of a convenient and easy way to access the agenda and backup information for Board of Supervisors meetings. The agenda itself is usually available the Friday before a Tuesday Board of Supervisors meeting. It is available on the web site, by FAX (530) 889-6800, and from the Clerk of the Board at 175 Fulweiler Avenue, Auburn, CA. However, the backup material is available only from the Clerk of the Board.

Additionally, there is not a document that describes how citizens can participate in their government, and the processes used by the Board of Supervisors.

Finding 1

The Placer County Government web page has improved steadily since its inception, and contains much information about the Placer County Government.

Recommendation 1

The Public Information Officer and staff should be commended for the web page. Funds should be made available to further its improvement.

Finding 2

The agenda for the Board of Supervisors meetings and its backup materials are not easily accessible to the general public.

Recommendation 2

The agenda for each meeting of the Board of Supervisors should be finalized sufficiently early that the agenda and its backup material can be made available to the public at least six days prior to the meeting. The agenda and backup material should be made available to the public at additional locations such as county libraries, various locations at the DeWitt Center, and on the web page.

Finding 3

Citizens need a simple and informative brochure describing the process of how our County Government works.

Recommendation 3

The Placer County Office of Public Information should develop a brochure or booklet for the general public, which describes Placer County Government processes and how the public can obtain the information it needs to participate actively in Placer County Government.

Respondents

Placer County Board of Supervisors
County Executive Office
Public Information Office

RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:

The Honorable James D. Garbolino
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Placer
Historic Court House
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603