MEMORANDUM

DATE:       June 2, 2008
TO:         Board of Supervisors
FROM:       Lew C. Bauman
            County Administrative Officer
SUBJECT:    County Administrative Officer’s Weekly Report for June 2, 2008

This is the weekly report by the County Administrative Officer to the Board of Supervisors. This report provides information on issues affecting the County and the progress of County activities.

Child Support Services

Monterey County Child Support Services was notified on May 9th that the Department has been added along with several other counties to the federal certification review for the California Child Support Automation System (CCSAS). The review will take place on Thursday June 6th and will include evaluation of specific functioning areas as outlined by the federal certification team. The federal team will spend a week in California visiting Merced, Fresno, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange and San Diego Counties. State staff will join the federal certification team in visiting the scheduled counties. Monterey County has been added with very short notice for preparation; however, the state CCSAS Certification Manager believes that with our excellent training team and staff we are very well prepared for the review.

Federal certification is an on-going process and this is a critical evaluation; reviews for this system will continue through the full transition of the state, with the last counties going live in October of 2008. Final certification will take place in 2009 of this very complex statewide system.

California has faced federal penalties for not having a full statewide, automated system since 1996. Currently the federal penalties are over $200 million per year, and with the preliminary
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approval of this system, the federal government has placed last year’s penalty in abeyance. Failure to pass the federal certification review will not only result in the $200 million that has been placed in abeyance becoming due, but an additional $200 million for the current federal fiscal year would become due as well. It is critical that the system achieves full federal certification.

Monterey County is a transitioned county, having gone live on the system in January of this year. We have been very active in providing suggestions and specific details as to fine-tuning the system to better fit the end-user and increase productivity.

Cooperative Extension

Food Safety Research and Education

In collaboration with researchers from UC Davis, advisors Steve Koike, Mike Cahn, and Richard Smith are continuing their field research efforts on food safety of leafy green vegetables. They are conducting practical field studies to determine the survival and ecology of E. coli in coastal agricultural environments. Thus far it appears that generic E. coli survival in soil is highly dependent on moisture and that it does not persist in Salinas Valley soils for extended periods of time. Koike has been presenting information on E. coli and food safety issues at meetings in Monterey, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Imperial counties. He also spoke on this topic at a statewide agricultural meeting in Phoenix, Arizona. Koike is a member of the advisory committee for the Hartnell College Ag Business & Technology Institute, and spoke on E. coli at their April 17th food safety practices seminar. The Monterey County Cooperative Extension office is helping UC Davis specialist Shermain Hardesty with her research study on growers’ costs incurred complying with additional food safety measures.

Informational Brochure

To learn more about the function of and benefits provided by Cooperative Extension, their latest descriptive brochure can be accessed on their website at: http://cemonterey.ucdavis.edu/files/52272.pdf

Elections

Register to Vote - Monday, June 2nd is E-1!

The deadline to register to vote for the June 3, 2008 Consolidated Statewide Primary Election was Monday, May 19, 2008. The Department kept its doors open until midnight to register voters. The evening was quiet and not as exciting as the close of registration for the February Presidential Primary. We did, however, assist a handful of voters in qualifying to vote in June.
The Department also attended the 49th Annual Castroville Artichoke Festival May 17th and 18th. This was one of the Department’s most successful voter outreach events with approximately 55 voters from Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties taking the opportunity to register to vote. Staff from the Santa Cruz County Elections Department partnered with Monterey County for the event.

The final report of registration (voters registered by the deadline of 5/19/2008) reflects a total of 147,714 registered voters in Monterey County. The political party affiliation breakdown is as follows: 73,404 Democratic Party, 42,582 California Republican Party, 2,887 American Independent Party, 1,101 Green Party, 585 Libertarian Party, 369 Peace and Freedom Party, 26,432 Decline to State/nonpartisan voters, and 354 voters registered with political parties that have not yet qualified for placement on the ballot in California (such as the New World Party or the Utopia Manifesto Party).

Polling Place Locations: For those who vote in person at their polling place on Election Day the assigned voting location is located on the back cover of the local sample ballot and voter information pamphlet. Voters can also visit the Department’s website to find their polling place location. Select the link called, “Where Do I Vote?” (fourth button down on the left side of the screen), provide your residence house number and zip code and click “Go For It!”

Vote by Mail (Absentee) Voting: The deadline to request a vote by mail ballot was Tuesday, May 27, 2008. As of Saturday, May 31st, the Department has sent out over 86,700 vote by mail ballots and has received over 29,600 voted returns. Vote by mail voters can log on to the Department’s website to check to see if their voted ballot has been received by the Department. There is a link on the home page called, “Have You Received My Vote by Mail Ballot?” The voter will need to provide their date of birth, residence house number and zip code to verify the receipt of their voted ballot.

Voters are reminded that all ballots must be received by the Elections Department by 8:00 PM at the close of polls on Election Day. The Department advises that voters should no longer return their ballot by US mail as it may not be received by the Department in time for it to qualify. With only one day to go before Election Day, voters should now return their voted ballot in person. Ballot drop-off services provided by the 12 Cities in Monterey County (excluding Salinas) ended on Friday, May 30, 2008. Now, voters should personally return their voted ballot to the Elections Department or to any polling place in Monterey County by 8:00 PM on Election Day. A list of Monterey County polling places is available on the Department’s website.

Did you know that leaving the small ballot stub on the top of the official ballot would push the weight of the ballot OVER 1 oz. and then the cost of the return jumps from $0.42 to $0.59! Just in case, the Department has a “postage-due” account so the Department will still receive the ballot from any voter who fails to put sufficient postage on the return. Ballot stubs left on and not caught by staff can also cause the ballot to get stuck in the vote tabulating machine because it
adds about ½ inch to the length of the ballot. So, for the next election, you should remove your stub so you can keep that as record you voted, so your ballot does not get stuck in the machine, and so you can save postage!

Poll Worker Training: Poll worker training began on Friday, May 16th and ended on Tuesday, May 27th with final Inspector Training occurring on Wednesday and Thursday, May 28th and 29th. Inspectors picked up all materials and supplies, except for voting machines, on Saturday, May 31st. As typical, there are new materials and new procedures to learn so attending class was mandatory. The Department also held “Practice Makes Perfect” in-house training on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, May 28th – May 30th between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. These training sessions are always available for poll workers who wish come by the office for refresher training on the machines or Election Day procedures.

This concludes the CAO report.