MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 13, 2009

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Lew C. Bauman
       County Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: County Administrative Officer’s Weekly Report for April 13, 2009

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.

Assessor

Due to the decline in residential real estate values, Monterey County Assessor, Steve Vagnini, would like to inform all County of Monterey homeowners that his staff is reviewing their upcoming 2009-10 Proposition 13 assessments to determine if a temporary reduction can be provided. The Assessor estimates that as many as 25,000 properties will receive reductions in assessments without any intervention or the need for costly assistance from outside parties. All property owners will receive a pre-tax bill notification in July or August, detailing their 2009-10 assessment and indicating any reduction provided.

We welcome inquiries from property owners who believe their property may have declined in value since they purchased it. We have already reduced the value of over 15,000 properties as of January 1, 2008. We will be reviewing most single family residences including condominiums as of January 1, 2009. We are using sales of property between October 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009 to conduct our review. Property owners will hear the results of that review in late July 2009. (Please note that if you purchased your property prior to January 1, 1999, your factored Proposition 13 base year value is probably below the January 1, 2009 market value of your home even in this depressed market. We will, however, be reviewing most homes regardless of date purchased.) If you still have questions or wish to provide us with information about the value of your property, please send an e-mail to vagninis@co.monterey.ca.us
Elections

May 5, 2009 City of Gonzales Special All Mail Ballot Election: Voting material, including a sample ballot, candidate statements, voting instructions and an official ballot was mailed to 2,542 registered voters in the City of Gonzales on Monday, April 6, 2009.

The deadline to register to vote for the May 5th Election is Monday, April 20th. The Department will be open during normal business hours, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Voter registration forms are also available at local U.S. Post Offices – registration forms bearing an April 20, 2009 date will be accepted.

May 19, 2009 Special Statewide Election: The Statewide Special Election is 36 days away. The Department has completed the layout and design for the official ballot containing the six (6) Propositions, 1A – 1F, as well as the layout and information contained in the local sample ballot and voter information pamphlet. Testing of the County’s voting equipment is underway.

Vote-by-Mail materials are set to be mailed on April 20th. As a cost savings measure, each Permanent Vote-by-Mail voter and each Mail Ballot Precinct voter will receive a voter package containing a tri-fold of general information regarding the special election, voting instructions, and a sample ballot along with their official ballot to vote and return. This same voting package was also sent to the County’s military and overseas voters.

Poll Worker Recruitment: Recruitment is nearly complete for the special election. Anyone who is still interested in being a Poll Worker either through the County Employee Election Officer Program, through the Individual Election Officer or Team Up for Democracy Programs, or a student or teacher interested in the Student Election Officer Program should contact the Department as soon as possible. Classes are set to begin in the next two weeks.

Anyone wishing to observe any election related activity for either of the above special elections should contact the Department for a schedule of activities. Public observation schedules are also attached to the Department’s front door.

City of Salinas – Referendum Petition: On Tuesday, April 7th, the Department was asked to verify 100% of the required signatures necessary to qualify a Referendum petition. The Referendum was submitted in order to halt a City Ordinance, adopted on March 10, 2009, adopting an amendment to the City’s Zoning Code and prohibiting certain sized large-scale retailers that dedicate 5% or more of the gross floor area to non-taxable items. The Department has until May 18, 2009, 30 days from the date of filing on April 6, 2009, excluding weekends and holidays, to verify the Referendum.

This concludes the CAO report.