

MEMO

HUMBOLDT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

DATE: June 30, 2015
TO: Phillip Smith-Hanes, County Administrative Officer
FROM: Thomas K. Mattson, Director of Public Works
SUBJECT: Grand Jury Response

As required by the Grand Jury, included in this memo are the responses required from the Department of Public Works to the Grand Jury Report "Flying Around Humboldt Airports".

FINDINGS

F1. Grass and weeds have begun to grow through the asphalt on the following airfields: Murray Field, Garberville Airport and Rohnerville Airport.
Response: The Department agrees with this finding.

F2. Trees need to be topped or removed for operational safety at the following airfields: Murray Field, Garberville Airport, Rohnerville Airport, Kneeland Airport and Dinsmore Airport.
Response: The Department agrees with this finding.

F3. Pavement is beginning to ravel and needs to be repaired at the following airfields: Murray Field, Garberville Airport and Rohnerville Airport.
Response: The Department agrees with this finding.

F4. Some tenants are in arrears with their hanger rents at Murray Field and Garberville Airport.
Response: The Department partially agrees with this finding. There are abandoned airplanes at Murray Field and Garberville airport, some tenants at all the airports with hangers go into arrears at times.

F5. The replacement airport landing beacon at Murray Field does not have the capability to be adjusted to the correct angle for operational safety.
Response: The Department partially disagrees with this finding but is investigating options to increase the angle in order to address the concern expressed.

F6. Two runway edge lights are not functioning at Murray Field.

Response: The Department agrees with this finding.

F7. An open-air hanger roof at Garberville Airport needs to be repaired.

Response: The Department agrees with this finding.

F8. Runway holding position markings are faded and must be remarked at Garberville Airport.

Response: The Department agrees with this finding.

F9. Kneeland Airport does not have adequate runway safety area lengths beyond either runway end. The airport is currently permitted to have inadequate lengths by the CalTrans Division of Aeronautics.

Response: The Department agrees with this finding.

F10. The Dinsmore runway does not match the length as reported on Form 5010-1. It was reported as 2,510' but was measured as 2,350'. This discrepancy must be corrected by July 1, 2015 to avoid suspension of its state airport permit.

Response: The Department agrees with this finding. This discrepancy has been corrected.

F11. The BOS has an airport advisory committee to advise them on matters regarding aviation in the county. Public Works does not share the Caltrans Division of Aeronautics' annual inspection notification letters with the committee.

Response: The Department agrees with this finding. The Department provides the Airport Advisory Committee information upon request.

F12. The Grand Jury could not identify a lead person with direct BOS authority to negotiate with an additional airline for BOS approval.

Response: The Department partially disagrees with this finding. The Aviation Program Coordinator is the point person to negotiate with airlines and has a standing package including a Board approved fee waiver program, small community air service grant funding, and fly Humboldt funding to offer in negotiations. This individual also has a standard county contract to offer for review in her negotiating tool box.

F13. There is a duplication of services between Public Works' Aviation and General Services in certain areas.

Response: The Department wholly disagrees with this finding.

F14. The Aviation Division's overall fund balance has been in the red since FY 2009-10.

Response: The Department wholly disagrees with this finding. The fund balance was projected to go into the red in the upcoming fiscal year and that is why the County has provided a loan for fiscal year 2015-16. Funds have exceeded expenditures since FY 2009-10.

F15. The Aviation Division is subsidizing a security cost difference of \$85,000 at CRCHCA for 2014-15.

Response: The Department partially agrees with this finding as \$85,000 is not an exact amount as the actual cost varies slightly above and below this amount annually.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation R1. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works remove grass and weeds from runways and repair cracks, as needed at: Murray Field, Garberville Airport and Rohnerville Airport. (F1)

Response: The Department will implement this recommendation when personnel and funding become available to perform the work.

Recommendation R2. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works remove or top trees to enhance operational safety at: Murray Field, Garberville Airport, Rohnerville Airport, Kneeland Airport and Dinsmore Airport. (F2)

Response: The Department will implement this recommendation as personnel, funding and permits become available, and as seasonal conditions allow.

Recommendation R3. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works repair the raveling pavement, as needed at: Murray Field, Garberville Airport and Rohnerville Airport.

Response: The Department will implement this recommendation when financial assistance is identified through the Airport Improvement Program and as well as the 10% match funding that is required.

Recommendation R4. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works verify rent income and institute a plan for revenue recovery with those airport tenants who are in arrears with hanger rent payments at Murray Field and Garberville Airport. (F4)

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The Department has a system in place for payment recovery at all of its airports for both hangers and tie downs. Revenue Recovery has recovered 97% of rent overdue, including late fees. The Department uses a bench mark of \$1,000 in late fees before sending over to Revenue Recovery and tracks all payments monthly.

Recommendation R5. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works replace the Murray Field landing beacon and adjust it to the correct angle to enhance operational safety. (F5)

Response: The Department will implement this recommendation as funding becomes available. The current beacon is on the Department's list for replacement when funding is available. The Department is aware of a request to raise the angle of the beacon and is exploring options as the new light installed does not drop down as far as the old light.

Recommendation R6. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works repair the non-functioning runway edge lights to enhance operational safety. (F6)

Response: The Department will implement this recommendation when personnel, funding and materials become available. The lighting is in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration standards.

Recommendation R7. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works repair the Garberville Airport open-air hanger roof. (F7)

Response: The Department will implement when funding is available.

Recommendation R8. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works repaint the Garberville Airport runway holding position markings to enhance operational safety. (F8)

Response: The Department will implement this recommendation when personnel, funding and materials become available to perform the work.

Recommendation R9. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works consider ways to bring the Kneeland Airport runway safety lengths up to current standards. (F9)

Response: The recommendation has already been implemented. An analysis has been completed.

Recommendation R10. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works complete a Corrected Airport Permit Application for Dinsmore Airport indicating the correct runway length before July 1, 2015 to avoid suspension of its state airport permit (F10)

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. This issue was corrected by changing the paint color at the airport, which resulted in reinstatement of the correct runway length as listed in the current airport permit. The Department removed the yellow paint designating a relocated runway threshold and replaced it with white paint designating a displaced runway threshold which corrected the discrepancy.

Recommendation R11. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that Public Works share Caltrans Division of Aeronautics' annual inspection notification letters with the Humboldt County Airport Advisory Committee (F11).

Response: The Department will implement this recommendation by sharing the annual inspection notification letters with the Airport Advisory Committee.

Recommendation R12. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that the BOS direct the Humboldt County Airport Advisory Committee to recommend alternatives to the BOS for realignment of the Aviation Division outside of the Humboldt County Department of Public Works. (F11) (F14)

Response: This recommendation will be partially implemented as part of an aviation division systems review that will be occurring. As part of this systems review the Airport Advisory Committee will be invited to participate.

Recommendation R13. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that the BOS assign one person with the authority to negotiate a deal for additional airline services and grant the designee a direct line of communication to the BOS (F12)

Response: The Department has partially implemented this recommendation. The Director of Public Works has a direct line of communication to the BOS and his designee, currently the Aviation Program Coordinator, has the authority to negotiate a deal within Board approved parameters (fee waivers), the small community air service grant funding, a county standard contract and fly Humboldt funding.

Recommendation R14. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends the BOS direct the County Administrative Officer (CAO) to perform an audit of the internal procedures between the Public Works' Aviation Division and General Services Division to eliminate any duplication of services. (F13) (F14)

Response: The Department will implement this recommendation. While the Department is unaware of any duplication of services, it is the Department's opinion that outside reviews and audits are useful tools in identifying operational inefficiencies in any operation.

Recommendation R15. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends that the Public Works' Aviation Division and the Sheriff's Department meet to strategize ways to reduce the cost differential for security services at CRCHCA. (F14) (F15)

Response: The Department has implemented this recommendation. The Department has and continues to have discussions with the Sheriff and the Transportation Security Agency on cost effective methods of meeting Federal security mandates.