This document is an extract of a larger publication.

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EXPLORING THE EXPLORERS

BACKGROUND

The Explorer program is a national award-winning program sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America through their program "Learning for Life".

The program is devoted to the development of youth through vocational training, leadership development and community service.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The 2010-2011 Tulare County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) decided to investigate the partnerships among the Explorers and the Sheriff's Department/local police departments.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

1. Interviewed relevant witnesses

2. Obtained and reviewed informational pamphlets provided by Explorer advisors

3. Observed Central Valley Law Enforcement Explorer Competition (Two jurors were privileged to be on a panel interviewing scholarship finalists.)

FINDINGS

1. Explorer Program Coordinators from the Sheriff's Department and several local police departments explained how their officers and other advisors interacted with and advised the Explorers. Many advisors and fellow officers provide their personal time and assets willingly in support of the program.

2. The ages of Explorer candidates range from 14 to 21.

3. Each Explorer Post teaches co-ed youth vocational and leadership training and provides them positive alternatives to uncommitted leisure time.

4. Explorer curriculum includes both classroom and actual hands-on training and role-playing.

5. The program provides positive adult role models and promotes positive peer support as an alternative to negative peer and social pressure.

6. Membership requirements include:
   a. parental approval
   b. good moral habits
   c. no serious law enforcement contacts or arrests

d. enrollment in school with a minimum 2.0 GPA and no failing grades
e. a background check
f. a willingness to volunteer personal time to their community

7. Some Explorer duties include:
   a. attending monthly meetings
   b. conducting traffic and parking control at community events and parades
   c. acting as color guards at parades

8. Explorers go on ride-alongs with police officers which enables them to have a better understanding of problems they may encounter if they decide to become officers in the future.

9. Explorers experience the responsibilities of a law enforcement officer.

10. Explorers attend annual competitions. One such event, the Central Valley Law Enforcement Explorer Competition, was held at the Tulare County Fairgrounds in March 2011. Members of the Grand Jury observed 26 explorer groups (10 from Tulare County) representing California, Nevada and Arizona. There were 350 Explorers and 100 Advisors participating in 28 scenarios commonly experienced by law enforcement officers. Members of the Boy Scouts of America Administration were present to monitor the scenarios to insure safe practices. There were 144 trophies and 5 scholarships awarded.

11. Explorers participate in social and recreational activities such as:
    a. camping trips
    b. picnics
    c. field trips and outings with other Explorer Posts

12. Most recently, Explorers from several posts throughout the county assisted with parking at the World Ag Expo in Tulare.

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of the Explorer program is to allow all Explorers to participate in the law enforcement experience which may ultimately lead them to be officers of the law or into other careers associated with law enforcement.

This is a superb program for our youth. The intensity of the relationships between officers and the youth is a primary factor in how well the program succeeds. The officers interviewed explained they are very active with the Explorers.

The Grand Jury applauds and thanks the volunteers/advisors who give unselfishly of their time to make Explorer competitions a success.

We compliment each Explorer for his/her dedication to the program, their peers and each other.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

None

PORTERVILLE ANIMAL CONTROL

BACKGROUND

For several years the City of Porterville contracted with the City of Lindsay for Animal Control Services. Within the past five years, the Tulare County Grand Jury (Jury) received several citizen complaints against Lindsay Animal Control (LAC) for failure to properly handle unprovoked vicious animal attacks upon Porterville citizens.

In 2006, the Jury received a citizen complaint concerning a vicious pit bull attack, which caused serious personal injury. As a result of this one complaint the 2006-2007 Jury published two Animal Control Reports and one on the Porterville Police Department.

This same Jury concluded that due to the gross negligence of the Porterville Police Department and LAC's failure to follow state laws, the pit bull had disappeared and was never found. It was therefore recommended that the City of Porterville adopt an Animal Control Ordinance, discontinue contracting with LAC for services and begin the operation of its' own Animal Control Service.

Porterville followed the Jury recommendations and adopted an Animal Control Ordinance. Porterville Animal Control (PAC) was also established and began servicing the needs of Porterville.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The 2010-2011 Tulare County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) decided to investigate and report on the operations of the now one year old PAC.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

1. Interviewed relevant personnel

2. Inspected the PAC facility

3. Obtained and inspected copies of Animal Control Contracts and Porterville's Animal Control Ordinance

FINDINGS

1. Porterville ended its contract with LAC on December 31, 2008.

2. PAC began its operation on January 1, 2009 and used the Porterville Maintenance Yard as a temporary holding facility for impounded dogs.

3. LAC ended its operation as 85% of its operating costs were generated from its contract with Porterville for Animal Control Services.