



JEFF LEIKAUF
SHERIFF - CORONER - PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR
COUNTY OF EL DORADO
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

April 3, 2025

The Honorable Vicki Ashworth
Presiding Judge of the El Dorado County Superior Court
495 Main Street
Placerville, CA 95667

RE: El Dorado County Grand Jury Case 25-03, EDSO: Preventing Internet Crimes
Against Children

The Honorable Vicki Ashworth,

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office (EDSO) appreciates the Grand Jury's investigation into the High-Tech Crimes Unit and the important work they do to keep El Dorado County residents safe from Internet Crimes Against Children. We acknowledge the findings presented in your report and provide the following responses to Findings 1 and 2, as well as Recommendations 1 and 2:

Sheriff's Response to the Grand Jury's Findings

Finding 1 – The EDSO HTCUC is a well-resourced unit that assists in a wide-variety of criminal investigations and coordinates with several regional and federal agencies on high-tech crimes. The small staff have the required industry expertise in IT and forensics technology, coupled with a law enforcement background to ensure the County has the skills and tools required to support the growing number of investigations and case requirements.

AGREE

Finding 2 – Current staffing levels in HTCUC do not allow EDSO to be a “full” member of ICAC, limiting the County's ability to receive additional grants and leverage ICAC

resources. HTCUC also has a significant backlog of leads from ICAC that could lead to as many as 100 consumers of CSAM or other crimes against children. While two detectives are currently assigned to HTCUC, their commitment to other units means they are less than full time on HTCUC investigations.

PARTLY AGREE

Sheriff's Response to the Grand Jury's Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – By the start of the 2025-2026 budget year, the HTCUC should take advantage of additional training and industry conferences to stay abreast of the latest technologies and cybersecurity trends, including attending the Black Hat conference, and technology vendor user group meetings, such as the Cellebrite user summit.

Response:

We have reviewed the training for The High-Tech Unit and discussed the training proposed by the Grand Jury. Our detectives were aware of those training resources and have historically not sought to attend them for budgeting reasons and perceived training benefit. Both detectives concur that they can receive greater training value by attending the DefCon Conference and various Cellebrite user trainings. The detectives have expressed an interest in the Black Hat conference and plan to attend in the future. Ultimately, the detectives can attend the trainings that are most beneficial to them, within the financial limits of their budget.

Recommendation 2 – By the start of the 2025-2026 budget year, identify an EDSO resource that can coordinate with the Sacramento regional ICAC task force roughly two days per week and allow HTCUC to become a "full member" of ICAC in order to leverage available grant money and additional regional resources.

Response:

Becoming a "full member" of the Sacramento regional ICAC task force is a misnomer. Any agency that participates in ICAC cases and has an MOU with the task force is considered an affiliate agency. There is no difference in affiliation between a dedicated person at the task force versus working remotely. In our discussions, we found that we can do a better job reporting our statistics to ICAC, which has a potential for allowing some funding sources from the task force for equipment and training. However, those

funds are distributed through Sacramento County (managing agency) and are discretionary based on ICAC performance stats. Currently, we do not see a great value to our agency in dedicating a detective to physically work at the task force.

In response to the need to expand the unit, we agree. We could use more people in the unit and more would be accomplished. Currently all cases are prioritized and the cases with active leads are worked. All cases that indicate a child is in danger, is investigated in a timely manner. The remaining low priority cases, we admit, remain in a backlog and are worked as time allows. Staffing in the High-Tech Unit is dependent on available budget, staffing levels of the sheriff's office and the needs of the agency. Having that in mind, we have discussed adding a retired annuitant to assist in the processing of the large backlog (Low priority) of ICAC and general forensic investigations. This would allow investigators to devote more time to the ICAC cases. To work more effectively on ICAC cases, the High-Tech team has proposed that the detectives will bifurcate their daily work. One will focus primarily on ICAC and the other on forensic investigations. This move will allow one investigator to work full time on ICAC cases.

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office is committed to ensuring an appropriately staffed and trained High Tech Crimes Unit. A Unit that meets the needs of our community, aggressively investigates crimes, while also balancing operational feasibility. Thank you for taking the time and showing the interest in improving our High-Tech Crimes Unit. We appreciate the feedback you have given.

Sincerely,



Jeff Leikauf
Sheriff – Coroner
Public Administrator