



2025-2026 Plumas County Civil Grand Jury

FINAL REPORT



Plumas County, California

June 1, 2026

LETTER TO THE JUDGE



2025-26 Plumas County Civil Grand Jury

The Honorable Douglas M. Prouty
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
County of Plumas

The Honorable William S. Abramson
Assistant Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
County of Plumas

June 1, 2026

Dear Judge Prouty and Judge Abramson,

The 2025–2026 Plumas County Civil Grand Jury is pleased to present its final report to you and the citizens of Plumas County, as stipulated by California Penal Code Section 933. This Consolidated Report includes the findings of two investigations, a statement regarding the Plumas County Jail, a summary of the Elections Process, a follow-up report assessing the status of prior Grand Jury recommendations, and the results of a peer survey of California Civil Grand Juries, providing additional context on common operational challenges and opportunities for improvement. With the submission of this report, the Jury concludes its work for the 2025–2026 term.

Members of the Jury have collectively devoted many hours to their responsibilities, including attending regular meetings, serving on investigative committees, conducting interviews and site visits, reviewing County records and online materials, and drafting, editing, and reviewing the reports contained herein. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside fellow citizens in the interest of the County.

In determining its areas of focus, the Jury selected the Fairgrounds and Roads Department for investigation based on their importance to the community and their impact on County residents.

The Jury extends its sincere appreciation to District Attorney David Hollister for his strong support and counsel, and to Judge Abramson for guidance. The Jury further thanks the Department of Social Services for the use of its conference room, the Plumas County Museum Law Library staff for providing space for interviews, and all individuals who cooperated with and participated in the interview process.

We respectfully submit this report for your consideration and express our hope that its findings and recommendations will assist County officials and inform the public, contributing to the effective governance of Plumas County.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Elliott

Leslie Elliott, Foreperson
On behalf of the 2025-26 Plumas County Civil Grand Jury

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INTRODUCTION TO THE 2025-2026 PLUMAS COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

This consolidated report summarizes the activities and findings of the 2025–2026 Plumas County Civil Grand Jury. Over its one-year term, the Jury conducted investigations into county operations and identified areas where government practices can be strengthened, and public resources used more effectively. The report reflects the collective efforts of all Jury members and provides a transparent account of the Jury’s work in promoting accountability, efficiency, and good governance within Plumas County.

COMPOSITION AND PURPOSE OF THE CIVIL GRAND JURY

The Plumas County Civil Grand Jury is composed of citizens selected from the county’s jury pool who volunteer and are appointed by a Superior Court judge to serve one-year terms. The Jury evaluates county and elected officials to ensure public funds are used efficiently, identifies opportunities to improve government operations, and reviews citizen complaints from Plumas County. The duties, powers, qualifications, and selection process of the Civil Grand Jury are established under California Penal Code §888.

Reduction in Size of the Plumas County Civil Grand Jury

Prior to November 2025, Plumas County was authorized to impanel nineteen jurors. Due to ongoing vacancies and a shortage of alternates, the 2025–2026 Grand Jury requested approval to reduce its membership to eleven members, as permitted under state law. The Plumas County Board of Supervisors approved this change in November 2025.

California law allows smaller counties to impanel an eleven-member Grand Jury instead of the nineteen members typical of larger jurisdictions. For a rural county like Plumas, this smaller structure maintains effective oversight while reflecting population size, workload, and fiscal responsibility, without compromising the Jury’s independence or investigative authority.

JUROR CONDUCT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All Civil Grand Jury proceedings are confidential. Jurors work collaboratively, and all investigations, findings, and recommendations are the result of group discussion and consensus.

Jurors are legally required to keep all matters discussed and documents reviewed private, both during and after their term. This confidentiality ensures the integrity of the Jury’s work, protects individuals involved, and allows jurors to carry out their duties without outside influence or interference.

INVESTIGATIONS AND CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

Each year, the Civil Grand Jury conducts investigations into county operations and issues of public concern. For the 2025–2026 term, the Jury reviewed twenty years of past reports to identify entities and topics not recently examined. Limited by a one-year term, the Jury focuses on a select number of issues to ensure thorough and meaningful review.

The Jury also reviews citizen complaints, although not every complaint results in a formal investigation. Complaints may be declined if they fall outside the Jury’s authority, lack sufficient information, involve confidential or ongoing legal matters, concern policy disagreements rather than potential inefficiency, address isolated issues without broader public impact, or have been previously investigated. Prioritization is necessary due to the Jury’s limited term and available resources.

Any citizen can file a complaint with the Plumas County Civil Grand Jury by completing a citizen form available at the County’s website: **Grand Jury | Plumas County, CA** (<https://www.plumascounty.us/216/Grand-Jury>) and mailing to the PCCGJ at:

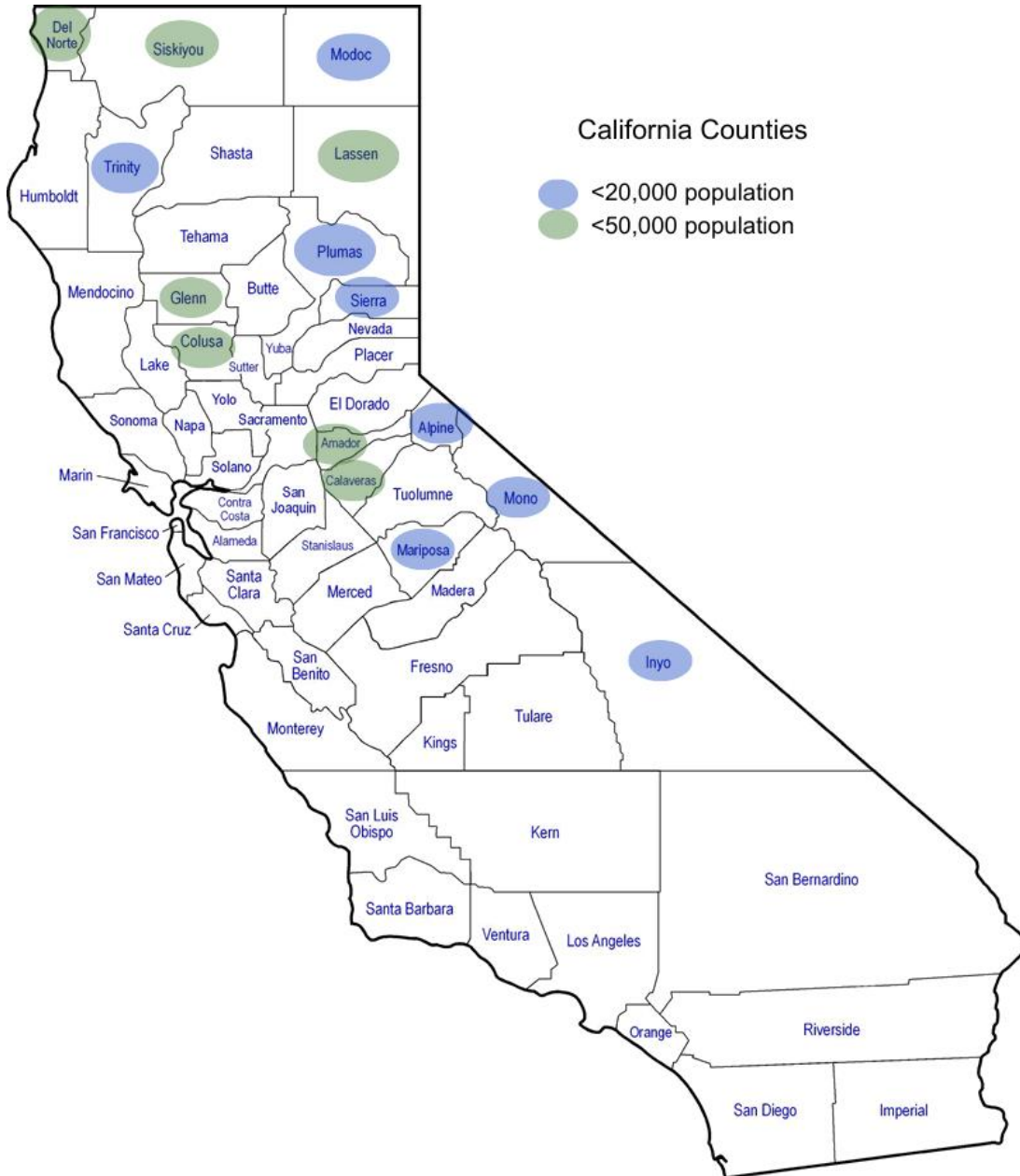
Plumas County Civil Grand Jury
PO Box 784
Quincy, CA 95971

To inquire about serving as a Civil Grand Juror, call the Plumas County Superior Court at (530) 283-6016.

2025-2026 CIVIL GRAND JURORS

Leslie Elliott <i>(Foreperson, Secretary)</i>	<i>Blairsden</i>	Erica Bryant Emanuel DaSilva	<i>East Quincy</i> <i>Lake Almanor</i>
Phillip Schneider <i>(Foreperson Pro Tem)</i>	<i>Cromberg</i>	Cynthia Lusk Kathryn Osher	<i>Spring Garden</i> <i>Crescent Mills</i>
Janis Davies <i>(Parliamentarian)</i>	<i>Lake Almanor</i>	Derek Twitchell Kodie Vielbig	<i>Lake Almanor</i> <i>Quincy</i>
Dana Bourgoine	<i>Portola</i>	Bil Yahner	<i>Greenville</i>

STATEWIDE SURVEY OF SMALL COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURIES: INFORMATIONAL REPORT



SUMMARY

Results from a survey completed by forepersons in ten small California counties suggest that Civil Grand Juries in small counties face similar challenges related to recruitment and retention of jurors, budgetary and operational issues, and support from County officials.

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

To provide broader context for our work, the 2025-26 Plumas County Civil Grand Jury (PCCGJ) conducted a survey of Civil Grand Juries in similarly sized California counties. This informational section is not a formal investigation but is included to offer comparative data and insight into statewide practices.

METHODOLOGY

The PCCGJ developed a survey with questions about county support and operations related to civil grand juries. After completion of the survey, the PCCGJ collaborated with the Civil Grand Jurors' Association of California (CGJA) to refine and distribute the survey to forepersons in counties with fewer than 50,000 residents.

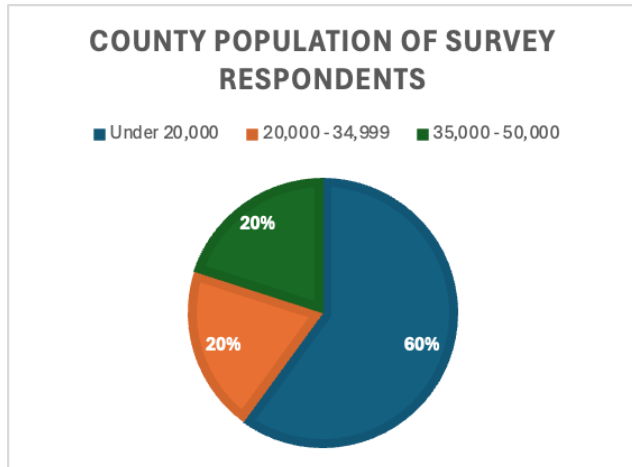
Fifteen California counties have populations of fewer than 50,000 (see Table 1). Two counties (not identified by CGJA) did not impanel a civil grand jury for 2025–26, and the survey was sent to the remaining 13 counties. The survey was emailed in early February, with a reminder sent one week later. The survey was anonymous, and all data are reported in aggregate to maintain anonymity.

Table 1. California counties with populations < 50,000

County	Pop.	County	Pop.	County	Pop.
Alpine	1,177	Mariposa	16,917	Glenn	29,369
Sierra	3,170	Inyo	18,800	Lassen	38,716
Modoc	8,491	Plumas	18,885	Amador	39,583
Mono	12,684	Colusa	22,026	Siskiyou	43,311
Trinity	15,600	Del Norte	26,544	Calaveras	44,722

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Forepersons from 10 counties (77%) completed the survey. Six of the responding counties (60%), including Plumas, had populations fewer than 20,000 residents (See pie chart).



Jury Composition and Operations

Plumas County was the only county with fewer than 20,000 residents that authorized 19 jurors on its Civil Grand Jury. In California, counties must impanel 19 jurors unless their population is fewer than 20,000 residents, in which case they may impanel 11 jurors. [Note: on November 18, 2025, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 25-9081 at the request of the 2025-26 PCCGJ, to reduce the jury to 11 members.]

Courts can allow jurors to serve an additional term, which assists with organizational efforts at the beginning of the term. Plumas County did not have holdover jurors in 2025-26, but 50% of the survey respondents reported having holdovers. Only two of the counties with <20,000 residents had holdover jurors in 2025-26.

To ensure a full jury (11 or 19 jurors) throughout the term, courts appoint alternates to replace jurors who resign. In the first half of the 2025-26 term (July to December), nearly all juries responding to the survey had used alternates, with one county appointing 10 alternates.

Until the Plumas County Board of Supervisors reduced the jury size in November 2025, the PCCGJ had 13 sitting jurors after using multiple alternates. Falling below the authorized number of jurors creates challenges to jury functions because a supermajority (12 for a jury of 19, 8 for a jury of 11) is required for Grand Jury decisions. The supermajority also serves as the quorum for meetings of the full jury (plenary).

Table 2 shows the distribution of jury size by population, the number and percent of jurors impaneled at the start of the term, and the number of alternates used through the first half of the term.

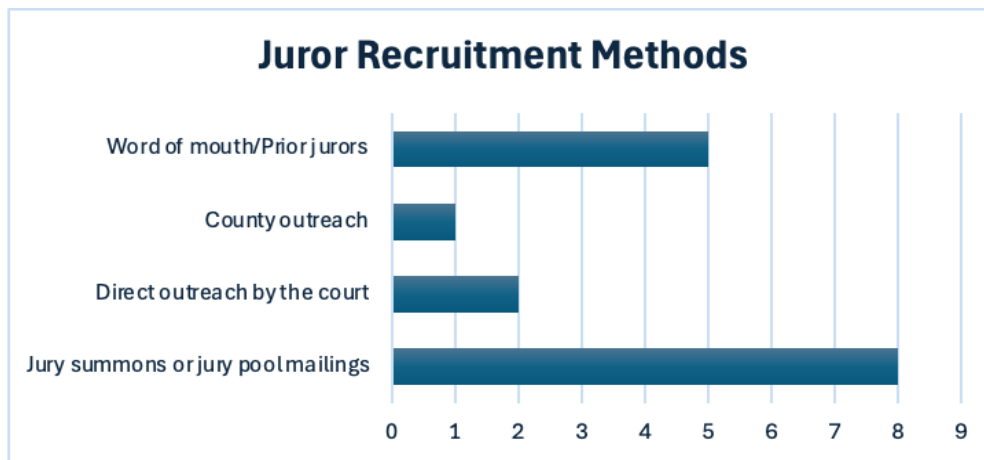
Table 2. County Populations and Jury Composition of Small California Counties (2025-2026)

Respondent	Population	Authorized Number of Jurors	Actual Number of Jurors Impaneled ¹	Percent Impaneled	Alternates Utilized in First Half of Term
Plumas County	<20,000	19	13	68%	5
County 2	<20,000	11	11	100%	3
County 3	<20,000	11	8	73%	0
County 4	<20,000	11	11	100%	5
County 5	<20,000	11	11	100%	2
County 6	<20,000	11	11	100%	2
County 7	20,000 - 34,999	19	19	100%	1
County 8	20,000 - 34,999	19	17	89%	1
County 9	35,000 – 50,000	19	19	100%	10
County 10	35,000 – 50,000	19	16	84%	NA ²

¹Jurors impaneled at the beginning of the term

²Foreperson had to find the replacements

Most counties (80%) used court summons to recruit jurors, and four counties used at least two methods for recruitment, including word of mouth or outreach by the county or Court (Figure 1). The survey results suggest that method of recruitment did not affect juror retention among the responding counties.



Jurors resign for a variety of reasons (Table 3), with the most common being the workload/time commitment of serving on the Grand Jury (70%) and employment or care-giving commitments

(70%). The percentage column in the table does not total 100% because respondents could select more than one response. Each reason for resigning could be selected by all juries.

Table 3. Juror reasons for resigning

Reasons for Resigning	Number	Percent
Time commitment/workload greater than expected	7	70%
Employment or care-giving conflicts	7	70%
Health or personal reasons	5	50%
Travel distance or scheduling conflicts	1	10%
Lack of administrative support	2	20%
Frustration with delays or obstacles that slowed investigations	1	10%
Unclear role, authority or expectations	4	40%
Interpersonal conflict within the jury	2	20%
Unsure/Undisclosed	2	20%
Other: Lack of computer and computer skills, no IT support, agenda was not going to be met, asked to resign because of absence at meetings		

Administrative and County Support

In most counties, including Plumas, the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors offers administrative support to the Civil Grand Jury. Survey results suggest that the level of administrative support varies across counties, with 40% of the respondents reporting inadequate support. Among resources offered, 80% of the Grand Juries reported having a dedicated meeting or office space and 70% reported having office equipment. Two respondents did not report any resources provided by the County (Table 4).

Civil Grand Juries are mandated by the state to conduct specific activities, most of which require resources such as email, places to store confidential documents, ways to copy and distribute documents, virtual options for meeting in adverse weather, among others. Survey respondents reported a number of operational challenges, as shown in Table 5.

Table 4. Resources provided by the county to Civil Grand Juries in small California counties.

Resources Provided by the County	Number	Percent
Dedicated meeting or office space	8	80%
Office equipment	7	70%
Secure electronic document storage	5	50%
County-issued communications (email/phone)	5	50%
Administrative or IT support	4	40%
None chosen	2	20%

Table 5. Operational challenges of Civil Grand Juries in small California counties.

Operational Challenges that Affect the Jury's Work	Number	Percent
Lack of holdover materials from prior jury	2	20%
No holdover jurors to provide continuity	4	40%
Limited or unavailable meeting space	2	20%
No official email or communication tools	4	40%
Budget issues	2	20%
Other: lack of copy machine use, no County training on how to use GJ general email, startup difficulties, outdated procedures manual, jurors lack computers, some jurors do little work, no knowledge of virtual meeting options, outdated computers and records		

Civil Grand Juries operate independently, receiving legal guidance from the District Attorney and County Counsel, with the Superior Court Judge appointing the foreperson and providing oversight.

In this survey, 60% of respondents reported using County Counsel as the primary legal advisor, while one county (<20,000 population) reported using the District Attorney, and two counties (<20,000 population) reported using both County Counsel and the District Attorney (not shown). One county reported using legal counsel from outside the County.

Respondents reported different levels of support from the legal advisors in their county (Table 6).

Table 6. Civil Grand Jury support from legal counsel in small California counties.

	Strong: Consistently Available and Responsive	Moderate: Responds with Some Delay or Limited Availability	Minimal: Rarely Available or Difficult to Reach	Not Applicable or Nonresponse
Judge	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	0
County Counsel	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
District Attorney	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	5 (50%)

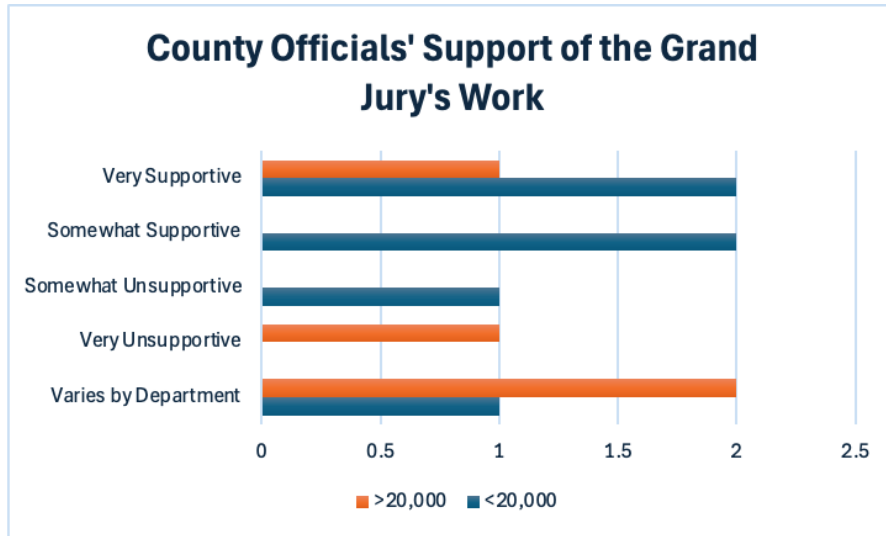
With respect to Grand Jury budgets, 50% of respondents reported having adequate budgets, while 30% reported inadequate budgets. The remaining respondents were unsure or reported that the County did not share information about the budget with the Jury. The smaller counties (<20,000) were more likely to report adequate budgets than the larger counties.

Of the six counties who reported making requests to the Board of Supervisors in the course of investigations, most (83%) said the Board members were generally or moderately responsive (Table 7).

Table 7. Responsiveness of Board of Supervisors to Civil Grand Juries.

	Generally Responsive: Respond Promptly and Cooperate	Moderately Responsive: Some Respond Quickly, Others Required Reminders	Minimally Responsive: Most are Slow to Respond or Require Multiple Follow-ups	Not Applicable: No Requests Have Been Made
Responsiveness of Board of Supervisors	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	4 (40%)

When asked about County officials' support of the Civil Grand Jury's Work, 50% of respondents felt the officials were somewhat or very supportive, while 20% felt the officials were unsupportive. Counties with populations <20,000 were more likely to report support of the Grand Jury's work.



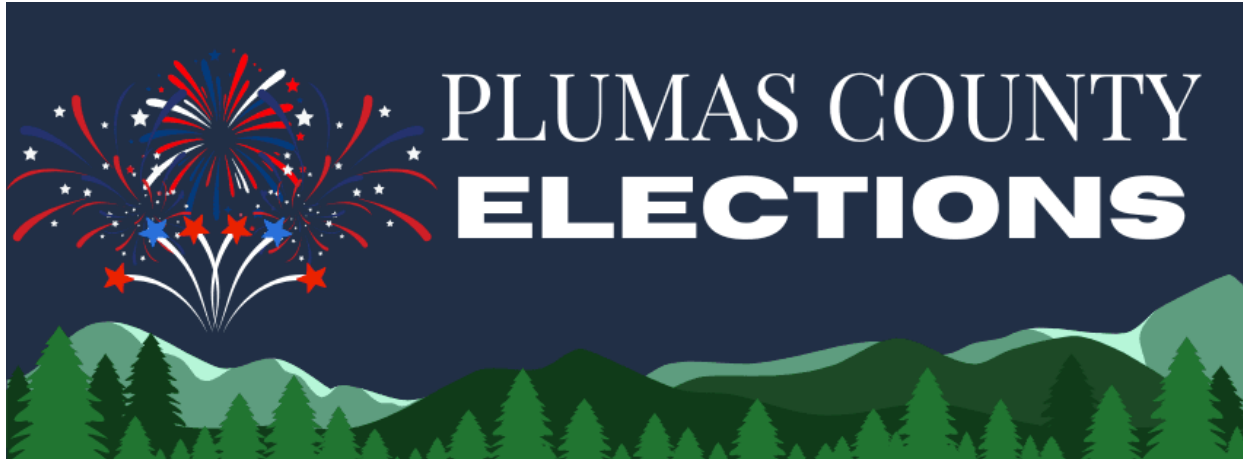
One level of support reported by all respondents is training of jurors by the CGJA. This includes a 2-day training at the start of the Grand Jury term and another 1-day training on report writing. Few counties reported receiving additional training from the Court or County.

OBSERVATIONS

The results of this survey suggest that small counties in California face similar administrative and operational challenges. Juror retention appears to be a common problem, and lack of understanding about the workload and time commitment plays a pivotal role in losing jurors. Several Grand Juries completing this survey expressed frustration about lack of resources such as communication tools, IT and administrative support, and ways to securely store confidential documents obtained in investigations. The 2025-26 PCCGJ experienced some challenges outlined in this report; however, it appears these issues are common in small California counties.

This survey does not answer questions about whether all Civil Grand Juries in California face similar challenges. That information would require an additional survey distributed to all Counties.

REVIEW OF COUNTY ELECTION PROCEDURES



SUMMARY

The Plumas County Civil Grand Jury (PCCGJ) reviewed procedures used by the County Elections Department during the November 2025 election ballot handling and tabulation process. The purpose of this review was to better understand election procedures and the safeguards used during the administration of elections. The PCCGJ observed numerous procedures designed to ensure secure ballot handling and transparent election administration.

BACKGROUND

The County Elections Department is responsible for administering local, state, and federal elections. Duties include voter registration, ballot distribution, ballot processing, vote tabulation, and reporting results to the State.

METHODOLOGY

The PCCGJ toured the entire Elections Department, speaking with staff and security personnel, while reviewing departmental procedures related to ballot handling and tabulation. The PCCGJ also observed the complete process of ballot processing and verification.

DISCUSSION

During its review, the PCCGJ examined procedures governing ballot handling, equipment storage, ballot tabulation, and voter record maintenance. The PCCGJ also reviewed procedures related to public observation and reporting of election results.

FINDINGS

F1. The Grand Jury observed security procedures implemented at multiple stages of the ballot handling and tabulation process, including restricted access to election equipment storage areas and camera monitoring of adjacent hallways where election operations occur.

F2. The ballot counting room operates without internet or wireless connectivity, and election procedures prohibit personal phones or other communication devices from being brought into the room.

F3. Daily vote tallies are transmitted to the State through a password-protected reporting system requiring multiple authentication steps.

F4. Ballots are stored in accordance with state law, and the Elections Department maintains documentation verifying compliance with state election requirements.

F5. Elections staff regularly update voter registration records. When ballots are returned as undeliverable, staff attempt to locate the affected voters and encourage them to update their registration information.

F6. The ballot verification process is open to public observation during ballot tabulation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury makes no recommendations.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

None.

THE 680-MILE MARATHON:

HIGH-ALTITUDE MAINTENANCE ON A LOW-ALTITUDE BUDGET

PLUMAS COUNTY ROADS: A DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION

This report presents the findings of an examination of the Plumas County Road Department, focusing on key challenges, including:

- The logistical challenge of maintaining a 680-mile, four-season road network including paved and unpaved surfaces.
- Delays in obtaining asphalt during the summer construction period due to contract competition.
- Ongoing difficulties with staff recruitment and retention.
- Limitations in systems for public communication, including complaint tracking and website accessibility

Providing a safe and reliable transportation network through the Lost Sierra.

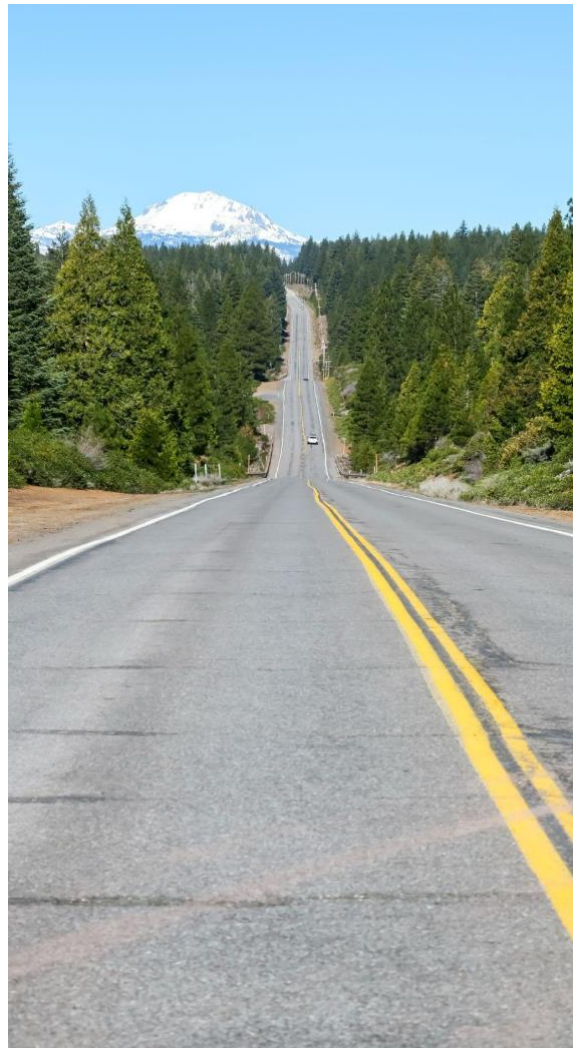


Photo: County Road A-13 from Hamilton Branch to State Hwy 36 provides the perfect view of Lassen Peak

SUMMARY

The 2025-2026 Plumas County Civil Grand Jury (PCCGJ) investigated the operations of the Plumas County Department of Public Works and Roads. The investigation revealed that the department faces several challenges common to rural counties, including limited funding, difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, and supply constraints associated with the county's remote location. The PCCGJ also learned that communication with the public regarding road conditions and road work could be improved by making information easier to locate on the county website and establishing a more formal process for tracking citizen concerns.

BACKGROUND

Road maintenance directly affects public safety, emergency access, economic activity, and the quality of life for county residents. In rural areas, particularly those with unimproved or partially maintained roads, consistent maintenance and effective communication are essential to ensuring safe travel and reliable emergency response. The PCCGJ conducted this investigation to examine the operations of the Plumas County Department of Public Works and Roads (DPWR) and to inform county residents about how road maintenance is managed. This investigation was initiated by the jury's interest in understanding this vital county function, rather than in response to specific complaints.

The DPWR is responsible for approximately 680 miles of improved and non-improved roads, including 90 bridges, more than 500 drainage structures and more than 5,000 road signs. The DPWR's functions include snow removal, road repair, road construction, bridge repair, bridge construction, tree maintenance, and other duties necessary to ensure public safety on county roads. Snow removal requires the greatest allocation of personnel, equipment, and time, and each snow season presents unpredictable challenges. The DPWR is responsible for maintaining improved and unimproved roads to ensure safety in the event of a wildfire.



Photo: Bailey Creek Bridge, constructed by DPWR, 2015-2016, County Road 322A, with dedication Plaque posted nearby.

METHODOLOGY

The PCCGJ sought to assess the current and projected status of Plumas County's improved and unimproved road network. The investigation examined the role of the DPWR, the maintenance and repair of the county's roads, and the effectiveness of related programs and procedures. The PCCGJ also reviewed budgeting and funding mechanisms for road maintenance and repair.

To conduct this investigation, members of the PCCGJ used observation, interviews with DPWR staff and other stakeholders, and review of relevant state, federal, and county documents, websites and news articles.

The investigation included the following:

- Review of DPWR maintenance programs and policies for county roads.
- Examination of the DPWR budget and funding allocated for road maintenance.
- Evaluation of the frequency of road surveys and the tracking of road conditions.
- Assessment of whether the current maintenance program is addressing deferred maintenance or falling further behind.
- Consideration of whether emergency access is used as a criterion for maintenance prioritization.
- Evaluation of complaint management and public information availability.
- The role of DPWR during wildfire evacuation.

The Plumas County Civil Grand Jury extends its gratitude to the many people who contributed to this investigation.

DISCUSSION

Mission of DPWR

The mission of DPWR includes:

- Maintaining, repairing, designing, and constructing county roads, bridges, and stormwater drainage systems in accordance with local, state, and federal laws/standards and in a manner that maximizes public safety
- Reviewing and approving land development projects as they relate to county road and drainage systems
- Pursuing and obtaining federal and state funds for the county roads, bridges, and storm drainage systems

In supporting its mission, the DPWR provides protection of the public investment in the county's existing road system and public safety by maintaining and improving overall roadway

conditions. Additional services of the DPWR can be viewed on the County’s website (<https://ca-plumascounty.civicplus.com/626/Main-Office>).



Photos: Seneca Road/County Road 306 (unimproved portion). Left: Rockslide, 2019; Right: Heavy snowfall, 2023.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

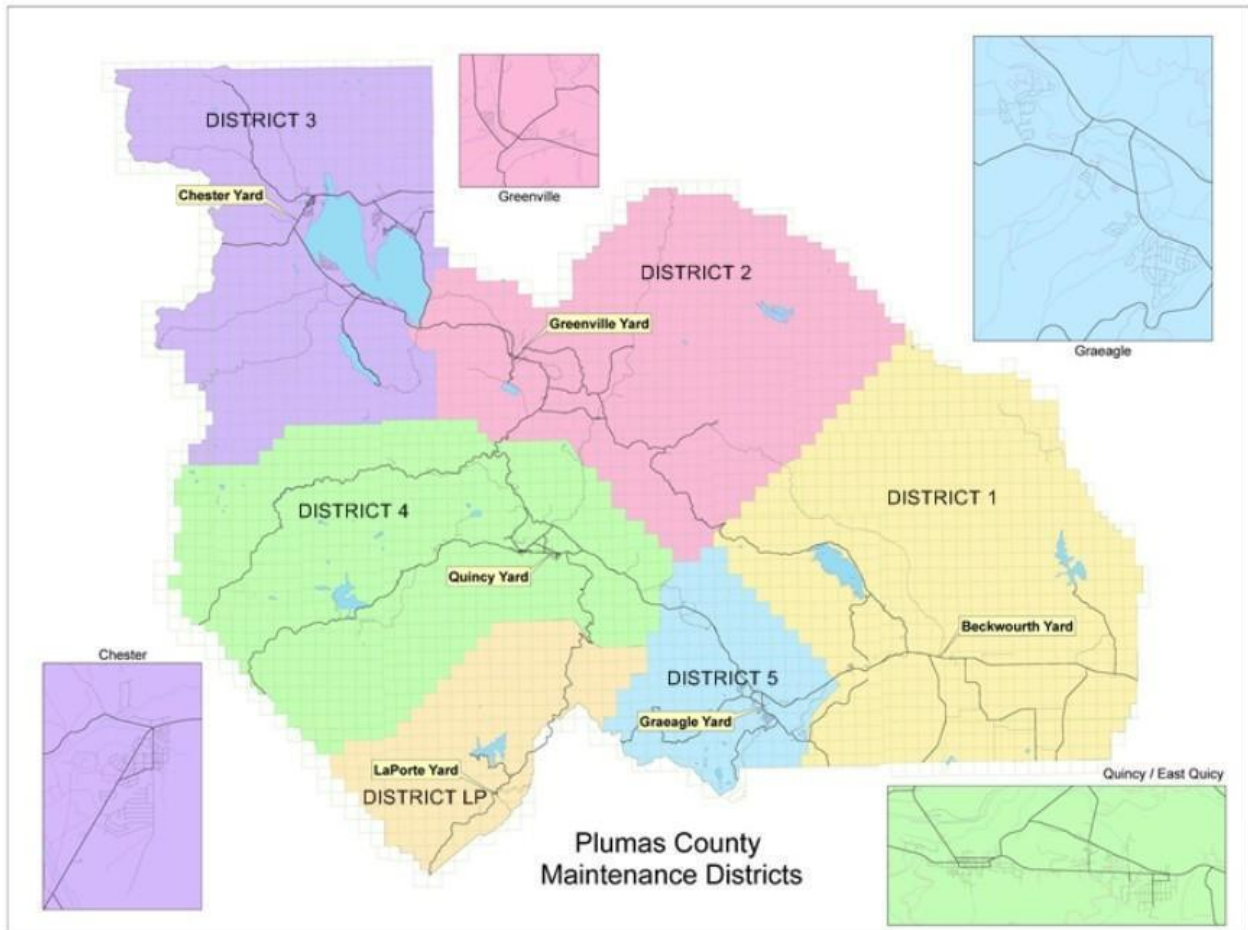
The DPWR is led by the Director of Public Works, who oversees both the Roads Department and the Solid Waste Division. The Director reports to the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The BOS establishes County policy, adopts the annual budget, and approves employee pay and benefits, while department heads are responsible for day-to-day operations and personnel management.

Supporting the Director is the Deputy Director, who manages the daily operations of approximately 53 employees across seven districts. The Director also supervises two employees in the Engineering Department and three employees in the Administrative Services Department.

The districts are organized as follows:

District	Area Covered	Staff (Supervisors + Workers)	Notes
1	Portola/Beckwourth	1 Supervisor, 4 Workers	
2	Greenville/Taylorville	1 Supervisor, 5 Workers	
3	Chester/Lake Almanor	1 Supervisor, 3 Workers	2 Vacancies
4	Quincy/Meadow Valley	1 Supervisor, 9 Workers	
5	Mohawk/Graeagle	1 Supervisor, 3 Workers	
LP	LaPorte	1 Supervisor, 3 Workers	
	Equipment Maintenance Shop	1 Supervisor, 8 workers	1 Vacancy

Map of the Districts



District Challenges

Each district presents unique challenges:

- District 1 - Beckwourth: Maintenance of some very remote roads, such as County Road 112 (Grizzly Road) spanning from State Hwy 70 to Lake Davis. High winds create snow drifts, and heavy snow is common.
- District 2 - Greenville/Taylorville: Frequently supports Chester when experiencing increased personnel demand during paving and snow removal.
- District 3 - Chester: Frequent heavy snowfall. Culverts and drainage must be cleared before storms. CR318 (Juniper Lake Road) suffers frequent damage from rainwater following the Dixie Fire. Difficult to maintain staffing.
- District 4 - Quincy: Large, high-traffic area with numerous residential roads. CR414 (Meadow Valley-Bucks Lake Road) is prone to frequent rockslides caused by rain. Heavy snowfall and ice.
- District 5 - Graeagle: Numerous residential streets. Heavy snowfall affects access to Johnsville.

- District LP - La Porte: CR511 (LaPorte Road) is closed in winter, isolating it from Quincy. Snow removal requires extra staffing that must access the area from Butte County. Depending on weather conditions, employees may commute over three hours from their residences in Oroville.

Plumas County, like other rural counties in the state, suffers from prolonged funding shortfalls and a lack of a competitive salary structure to compete with other small counties and the private sector. The DPWR experiences staffing issues because of this salary deficiency. It is common for employees, after receiving required training and certifications, to leave the Department of Public Works for employment in the private sector. Additional hiring and retention challenges include limited pre-employment experience with relevant equipment, varying capacity for physically demanding work, expectations for rapid advancement, and differing levels of trainability. In contrast, employees with a strong commitment to the local community are more likely to remain in long-term positions. During the time of the PCCGJ investigation, the Director was fulfilling the roles of three unfilled administrative staff positions – Engineer, Transportation, and Assistant Director – straining the functions of the department as a whole.

Road Maintenance

The DPWR uses systematic inspection and evaluation procedures to ensure the safety and longevity of Plumas County roads. Road conditions are closely monitored by the Director using StreetSaver, a pavement management system. This data analysis platform empowers the road department to make decisions that extend pavement life, optimize budgets, and justify funding.



Photo: Crack sealing on Meadowbrook Loop, Chester, CA. 2026

The program includes pavement performance, Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping tools, analytics, budget preparation and planning, and pavement condition assessments. Technicians inspect the entire road system on a two-year cycle, assigning each road a numerical

rating from 1 to 10. Based on these ratings, the DPWR determines whether a road requires full replacement or an asphalt overlay. Deferred maintenance is usually due to seasonal constraints, staffing shortages, and budget limitations.

The Director coordinates with the Deputy Director to schedule major repairs, rotating across the districts. Roads showing surface damage, such as potholes or “alligatoring” (stress cracking), may not be suitable for overlay; this determination depends on the condition of the underlying sub-surface structure. The primary causes of road stress in Plumas County are heavy load traffic and freeze-thaw cycles associated with seasonal moisture.

Bridges are inspected by DPWR, as well as by CALTRANS and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. When a bridge requires replacement, the DPWR funds the project upfront and may be reimbursed through federal programs. Delays in CALTRANS approval after plan submission can result in project postponement or cancellation. The most recently constructed bridge is located across Spanish Creek on Ranch Road in Meadow Valley and was completed eight years ago. Several bridge projects are currently in the planning stage.

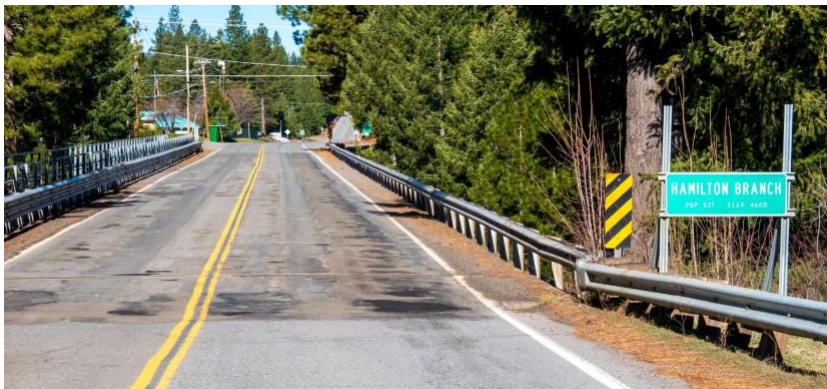


Photo: Hamilton Branch Bridge, County Road A13. Currently on the list for engineering review of underlying structure to determine best practice for repairs/repaving.

The DPWR recently procured seven, new Ford F-550 one-ton pickup trucks equipped for snow plowing. These vehicles do not require a Commercial Driver License (CDL) to operate, which enhances the department’s ability to staff and remove snow efficiently during winter months.

Materials and Pavement Standards

A challenge facing the DPWR is the limited availability of construction materials in remote areas. Asphalt, the primary material for road repair and resurfacing, is in short supply. Currently, there is only one asphalt supplier in Plumas County, located in Chester. This supplier also provides asphalt to CALTRANS and private companies. Because CALTRANS uses a different substrate that meets its specifications, competition for materials can prevent the DPWR from obtaining asphalt when needed.

Plumas County Code (Title 9 – Road Specifications) establishes local pavement standards for public and private roads, including:

- Type B asphalt concrete
- ¾-inch maximum aggregate
- Minimum compacted thickness of 3 inches
- Structural design using the California R-Value method

These standards are codified locally and are not automatically tied to CALTRANS Standard Specifications Section 39.

CALTRANS Section 39 Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) mixes are designed for higher traffic volumes and longer design life. They are strictly controlled via a Job Mix Formula (JMF) and often use 9.5 mm or 12.5 mm surface mixes depending on the application. CALTRANS also utilizes specialized mixes, including rubberized HMA, gap-graded mixes, and open-graded friction courses, with large and continuous production runs.

Producing smaller County-specific batches is challenging because changes in aggregate gradation require plant bin adjustments, conveyor cleaning, and recalibration. These interruptions reduce plant efficiency: a typical 200-ton Caltrans production run is efficient, while a smaller 40-ton County run requiring a changeover is disruptive. This operational constraint often limits the DPWR’s ability to obtain asphalt in a timely manner.

(Sources: California Highway Design Manual – Chapter 630, Caltrans Standard Specifications – Section 39, Plumas County Code of Ordinances – Road Specifications)

DPWR Website Organization and Accessibility

PCCGJ made frequent use of the Plumas County website (<https://plumascounty.us/>) in its investigation and development of this report. A search for “Roads” on the main page yields numerous pages, reports, and documents with inconsistent posting dates. Similarly, a search for “Road Closure” returns many entries stored within the County’s “documentcenter/view/#####” system.

For users seeking information about Plumas County roads, the system is difficult to navigate. Information is distributed across multiple locations without a clear organizational structure. For example, construction updates are largely focused on bridges and often include progress images and details, but frequently lack completion dates and final documentation.

This lack of organization and consistency makes it unnecessarily difficult for the public to locate accurate and current road information.

The PCCGJ recognizes that maintaining and updating website content across multiple program areas is a complex and time-consuming responsibility, particularly given existing departmental

workloads. This observation is not intended to minimize those challenges, but rather to highlight an opportunity to improve public access to important road-related information.

Citizen Complaints

Currently, Plumas County citizens do not have a formal process for submitting complaints regarding road conditions to DPWR. Citizens may phone the DPWR office and report issues to the secretary, who then forwards the complaint to the Deputy Director. In some cases, citizens who know DPWR employees may report concerns directly to those staff members. Implementing a standardized system for submitting and tracking citizen complaints would provide greater assurance that public concerns are being properly received and addressed.

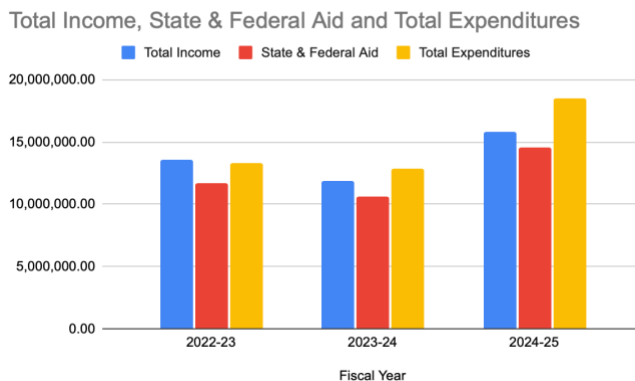
Funding of the DPWR

DPWR receives no funding from the Plumas County General Fund, therefore county general tax revenues, including property taxes, are not used to fund road maintenance. Instead, its operations are supported by multiple sources, including:

- State of California Highway Users Tax
- California Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (RMRA)
- Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS)

Several State and Federal Grants provide additional funding for the DPWR. These grants are consistent from year to year, with the exception of the Federal **Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation (HBRR)** funding, which is contingent on completion of bridge projects. An additional source of funding is Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), which is utilized if the Highway Users Tax is repealed or suspended for a period. PILT funds come from the General Fund and need to be negotiated by the Director.

The following chart summarizes revenues and expenditures for DPWR for Fiscal Years 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25:



Allocation of Plumas County Citizen Tax Money

State and federal transportation funding originates from taxes and fees paid by residents. These include fuel taxes on gasoline and diesel, vehicle registration fees (including SB1 Vehicle Fees), and state and federal income taxes. These are deposited into statewide accounts including the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (RMRA), which collects money from SB1 fuel and vehicle fees for local and state road work, and the Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA), which includes traditional gasoline/diesel excise taxes shared with local governments. The state allocates that income to counties for specific highway and road repair work, and Plumas County then uses this income to fund the DPWR.

The Plumas County Transportation Commission (PCTC) administers "regional, state, and federal funding for projects related to roadways, bridges, public transportation services, railways, airports, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian amenities. Through this process the PCTC seeks to protect the rural qualities and historic character of Plumas County."

(Source: Plumas County Transportation Commission:

<https://www.plumascounty.us/2285/Plumas-County-Transportation-Commission>)

Emergency Access and Road Maintenance

The PCCGJ considered whether emergency access is used as a criterion in prioritizing road maintenance within the Department of Public Works. The Jury determined that Plumas County does not have a direct operational role in emergency response activities such as wildfire evacuation, as those responsibilities primarily reside with CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service.

However, the Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES) plays a key role in emergency preparedness and coordination and has developed neighborhood-specific evacuation route mapping intended to guide residents and emergency responders during evacuation events.

Based on interviews conducted during the investigation, the PCCGJ noted that this evacuation route information is not currently incorporated into the Department of Public Works' road maintenance prioritization process. Given the importance of reliable road access during emergency events, particularly in a rural, wildfire-prone county, incorporating evacuation routes as a factor in maintenance planning could enhance public safety and emergency readiness.

Roadmaps for Wildfire Evacuation

The Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES) provides updated evaluation maps for all roads in the county under the heading Emergency Operations Plan - Annex #E - Evaluations. Wildfire Evacuation Maps were developed for select Plumas County communities with potential high fire hazards.

These maps contain known structures, water sources, and current road systems for each area and are designed as guidance for primary and secondary evacuation routes for individual communities.

They provide access to both printable maps and zoomable maps for mobile device viewing. [Links to maps.](#)



Photos: Stampfli Lane bisects Indian Valley, at the confluence of Wolf Creek and Indian Creek. Heavy Spring snowmelt and rains often result in the road flooding. A resident ignores the road barriers and Flood Warning. Two routes of access remain available when this one is flooded.

Additional Observations

During the course of this investigation, the PCCGJ learned more about the functional limitations of the DPWR including:

- Roads crews work under seasonal challenges in the county’s mountain and canyon geography. Short dry months with warm temperatures limit asphalt repairs, while variable winter conditions demand snow removal, rock/mudslide clearing and drainage/flooding issues.
- Winter seasonal employees are in short supply compared to past years. These positions were frequently filled by off-season loggers and retired roads’ workers. In at least one district this means there are no overnight shifts for snow-plowing, which leads to delays in clearing low-traffic roads. In another district, housing out-of-area, snowplow drivers during heavy storms adds a logistical challenge.

- Proper grading of unimproved roads must be performed in the spring while soils are damp, since grading muddy or dry/dusty roads creates more damage to the roadbed. Only the highest-traffic unimproved (dirt) roads receive a second grading during the summer when the crews' greatest focus is on paved roads repairs.
- Clearing of downed trees on the county's unimproved and remote roads has escalated dramatically since the damage to our forests from recent massive wildfires. Right-of-way (ROW) downed trees are handled on a case-by-case basis and frequently are partially removed by citizens and logging companies seeking access to the back-country.
- Requirements set forth by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) program limit the use of older diesel engines; newer CARB-friendly equipment requires more specialized off-site maintenance and costly update subscriptions.
- Equipment storage and maintenance barns are at a premium with no room to grow. Lack of proper storage leads to potential downtime, reduced efficiency, transit costs, and reduction/sharing of equipment across the districts. However, off-season storage provides an opportunity to perform annual maintenance.
- Variability among phone service providers, and unreliable cell tower performance, can disrupt crew communications in remote areas.

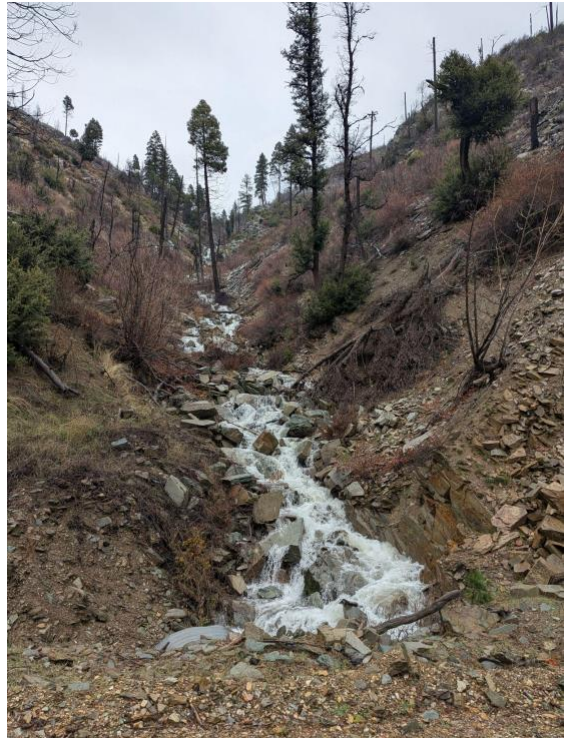


Photo: Keeping culverts clear prevents major washout road damage from seasonal runoff on unimproved roads.

Commendations

- All districts, crews and leadership demonstrated exemplary inter-departmental communication.
- Department heads, Supervisors and Lead Workers demonstrated a high level of job satisfaction and pride in their work.
- District Supervisors and Lead Workers are supported through the Leadership and Safety Training Program (LSTP).

- Safety is a prominent topic in the DPWR, both for the public and employees. Public safety is always the highest priority when scheduling assignments.
- The county benefits from an in-house, state-licensed, Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) training program that attracts and develops untrained applicants. However, employees who obtain a CDL are often recruited for higher-paying positions in private industry.

What Does DPWR Want You to Know?

- Please don’t park on the street during snow days, so we can plow the road.
- Which roads get the first attention? The “collectors”, which are high priority roads that bring all the traffic to the highways.
- Sometimes employees are seen driving around or parked, and the public may think they are not working. They must inspect the roads of their district daily, provide necessary paperwork, place materials orders, and communicate frequently with the main office.
- Each district crew is made up of a handful of employees, while covering extremely large districts.
- It was noted that crews may travel long distances to investigate reported concerns that ultimately require little or no corrective action.
- “We know the potholes are there, we just don’t have time to get to all of them.”



Photo: October views along Seneca Road (County Road 306), highlighting the importance of unimproved roads in accessing Plumas County’s scenic rural areas. (Photo Credit: Janis Davies)

FINDINGS

The Plumas County Civil Grand Jury Finds:

F1. Based on interviews conducted, communication among the Director, Deputy Director, Public Works staff and District Supervisors is effective and contributes to the smooth operation of the department.

F2. Employee morale is high, resulting in more efficiency by employees and greater public satisfaction.

F3. Limited availability of asphalt delays projects, reduces seasonal productivity, and creates operational inefficiencies, including potential crew downtime, increased overtime, and challenges in scheduling work dependent on external asphalt plant production.

F4. The DPWR website is difficult to navigate, with road-related information dispersed across multiple locations, inconsistently dated documents, and incomplete project updates, limiting the public's ability to easily access clear and current information.

F5. The Department of Public Works lacks a formal, standardized procedure for the submission and tracking of citizen complaints regarding roadway issues, which limits consistency, transparency, and the ability to maintain a historical record of previously reported concerns.

F6. The lack of competitive salaries contributes to challenges in hiring and retaining employees, resulting in a loss of efficiency in the DPWR's mission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plumas County Civil Grand Jury recommends:

R1. The Board of Supervisors direct the Director of Public Works to develop and implement a formal, standardized method for the submission and tracking of citizen complaints regarding roadway issues. Suggested completion date January 1, 2027.

R2. The Board of Supervisors direct the Director of Public Works/County Engineer to conduct a documented cost-benefit analysis of the County's ¾-inch Type B aggregate asphalt specification compared with alternative mix options, including mixes compatible with those produced at the local plant.

- (1) The analysis should include evaluation of whether aligning mix specifications, in whole or in part, with the dominant plant production mix would reduce delays and lifecycle costs without materially compromising pavement durability under local traffic and climate conditions.
- (2) The analysis should consider production changeover costs, crew delays, overtime, seasonal constraints, and pavement performance history.

Suggested completion date May 1, 2027.

R3. The Board of Supervisors direct the Plumas County Department of Public Works/Roads to conduct a comprehensive review and reorganization of its website to improve public access and transparency by

- (1) consolidating road-related information into a clearly structured and centralized location,
- (2) implementing standardized posting practices that include consistent dates, status updates, and project completion information, and
- (3) establishing a regular review process to ensure that outdated or incomplete materials are updated or archived.

Suggested completion date July 1, 2027.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Required Responses

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Plumas County Civil Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the Board of Supervisors (BOS)

- Findings 3, 4, 5, 6
- Recommendations 1, 2, 3

Invited Responses

The Plumas County Civil Grand Jury invites responses as follows:

From the Public Works Director/County Engineer:

- Findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- Recommendations 1, 2, 3

From the Deputy Director of Public Works:

- Findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- Recommendations 1, 2, 3

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Department of Public Works: Roads

Plumas County Public Works Main Office, <https://plumascounty.us/626/Main-Office>

Plumas County Road Maintenance List of Districts and Lead Employees:
<https://plumascounty.us/547/Road-Maintenance>

Plumas County Transportation Commission <https://www.plumascounty.us/2285/Plumas-County-Transportation-Commission>

Winter Road Closures and Map: <https://plumascounty.us/1979/Winter-Road-Closures>

Funding

California Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (RMRA): funding apportionments
https://www.sco.ca.gov/aud_road_maintenance_sb1.html

Guidelines Relating to Gas Tax Expenditures for Cities and Counties, MALIA M. COHEN, CALIFORNIA STATE CONTROLLER, May 2025 https://www.sco.ca.gov/Files-AUD/Gas_Tax_Guidelines_5-13-2025.pdf

Local Streets and Roads Estimates: 2025-26, 2026-27 Including Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA) and Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (RMRA)
<https://californiacityfinance.com/LSR2601.pdf>

Section 2032 of the Streets and Highways Code, AB2679: Amendment Bill, Feb. 20, 2026
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB2679

Materials and Pavement Standards

Plumas County Municode: Article 6. - ROAD SPECIFICATIONS

https://library.municode.com/ca/plumas_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT9PLZO_CH4DEST_ART6ROSP_S9-4.601PUPRROSP

Plumas County Request for Bids (RFB) Asphalt Products - 2025
<https://www.plumascounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/50631/RFB---2025-Asphalt-Products>

Plumas County Emergency Operations Plan: Wildfire Evacuation Maps

The Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES) provides updated evacuation maps for all roads in the county under the heading Emergency Operations Plan – ANNEX E - Evacuations. <https://plumascounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/17924/Emergency-Operations-Plan---Annex-E-Wildfire-Evacuation-Map-Index-August-2018?bidId=>



Plumas County Department of Public Works (Photo credit: Kodie Vielbig)

THE FAIRGROUNDS: POLISHING A JEWEL OF OUR COUNTY



Photo: Plumas Sierra County Fair Entrance

SUMMARY

The Plumas County Fairgrounds serves as a multi-use facility for the community. It is often recognized as a "Jewel of Plumas County" due to its beauty and versatility in hosting and supporting various organizations, clubs, and individual activities. In addition, county, state, and federal agencies utilize the facility as a training ground, storage area, staging site, fire camp, and evacuation center in times of crisis. The annual Plumas Sierra County Fair, held in July, is also hosted at this location.

The facility is wholly owned by Plumas County and is operated under the Fair Department, which reports directly to the Board of Supervisors (BOS). With the current Director of Fair and Fairground Events planning to retire in 2026, the 2025-2026 Plumas County Civil Grand Jury (PCCGJ) elected to investigate the facility's management and operations. The purpose of the investigation was to understand the needs of the facility and identify areas of improvement. This review describes the PCCGJ's findings and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The location of the Plumas County Fairgrounds was established in the 1940s on land formerly known as Rockwell Park in East Quincy. The Fairgrounds slowly evolved into what we see today with many of the existing structures built in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Fairgrounds operations are overseen by the Director of Fair and Fairground Events with support from the Building/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor and seasonal workers. Funding for the Fairgrounds comes from the County Budget, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and revenues generated from rentals, RV and boat storage, and events held at the Fairgrounds.

METHODOLOGY

The PCCGJ utilized observation, interviews, and research to ensure the accuracy of its findings. Members of the PCCGJ conducted tours of the Fairgrounds to corroborate information obtained from interviews and to gain first-hand knowledge of the operations and physical condition of the facilities.

The Plumas County Civil Grand Jury extends its gratitude to the numerous individuals who contributed to this investigation.

DISCUSSION

Fairgrounds Facilities and Assets

The Plumas County Fairgrounds encompasses approximately 62 acres of multi-use space. It includes event-friendly buildings, livestock facilities, a grandstand, a horse arena, and on-site camping facilities. Key buildings available for rent include the following:

- Tulsa Scott Pavilion, a 250-person capacity event space with an adjacent commercial kitchen
- Mineral Building, a meeting space suitable for up to 100 people
- Serpilio Hall, primarily used for trade shows and sporting activities
- Art Barn, which provides space for exhibitions and off-season rental storage.



*(left) Serpilio Hall (center) Mineral Building (right) Art Barn
Images courtesy of the Plumas Sierra County Fair website*

Several outdoor areas are available for use throughout the year. The grandstands have been used for concerts and dirt track racing in the past. A horse arena hosts rodeos, horse shows, riding clubs, and other equestrian events. Livestock facilities include barns and pens used by the Feather River College (FRC) Rodeo, FRC Equine Studies Program, 4H, and Future Farmers of America (FFA) in the summer, and converted to RV and boat storage rentals during the winter. The campground facilities are available during special events or by group reservation. All of these facilities and assets are available for rental throughout the year. They are regularly used as venues for local organizations and training activities, and have hosted several high-profile events, including the Plumas Sierra County Fair each July.



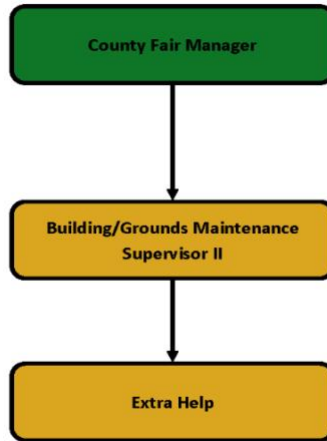
*(left) Grandstand area (center) livestock barns (right) lower campground
Images courtesy of the Plumas Sierra County Fair website and PCCGJ*

Staffing and Resources

The Plumas County Fairgrounds is staffed by two full-time employees (FTEs), one salaried and one hourly, according to the FY 2025-2026 budget (see bibliography item #3). Together, these full-time employees receive a total of \$232,416 in annual wages, reflected under line item 51000 - Regular Wages. In addition, the Fairgrounds relies on seasonal workers (listed as Extra Help in the budget book) to assist during the summer months, with \$100,000 budgeted under Line item

51020 - Other Wages. During the Fair itself, these positions are supplemented by volunteers who are not compensated.

Total Salaries and Benefits are budgeted at \$473,385 for FY 2025-2026, which is more than half of the Fairgrounds' operating budget.



Fair Department organizational chart courtesy of Plumas County Budget Book FY 25-26

In previous years, additional full-time positions were included in staffing, such as a Fiscal Coordinator to assist the Director of Fair and Fairground Events and an additional Maintenance Worker to support the upkeep and repair of the Fairgrounds. In approximately 2013, due to fiscal constraints, these positions were no longer funded. In the absence of these positions, the Director of Fair and Fairground Events and the Building/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor have assumed responsibilities outside of their job descriptions. As a result, both employees have worked a significant amount of overtime, particularly during the summer events season when they may work six or seven days per week for eight or more hours per day.

Fairgrounds Operations/Oversight

The Plumas County Director of Fair and Fairground Events, who reports directly to the Board of Supervisors, carries an extensive list of responsibilities. One major responsibility is planning, organizing, and overseeing the annual Fair. Duties include managing fiduciary transactions such as budgeting, tracking revenue, and negotiating contracts with vendors, service providers, and entertainment providers. The position also promotes the Fair and the Fairgrounds for year-round use through advertising, seeking additional events, and engaging the local community. In support of the Fair and other events, the Director of Fair and Fairground Events oversees facility setup and breakdown, ensures compliance with state and county safety guidelines and performs all fiscal operations. The role further includes oversight of maintenance of the entire Fairgrounds, as

well as the hiring, training, and supervision of employees, including the Building/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, other staff, and volunteers.

The Building/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor reports to the Director of Fair and Fairground Events and is responsible for maintaining the grounds and buildings and providing custodial services. Duties include inspecting facilities and identifying needed repairs related to construction, plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems, while addressing issues to ensure compliance with applicable standards and safety guidelines. The Supervisor also prepares facilities for events and ensures proper setup. Additional responsibilities include maintaining inventory of supplies and equipment necessary for the upkeep of the Fairgrounds and its buildings, as well as overseeing outside contractors hired for major repairs and facility upgrades.

Fairgrounds/Fair Funding

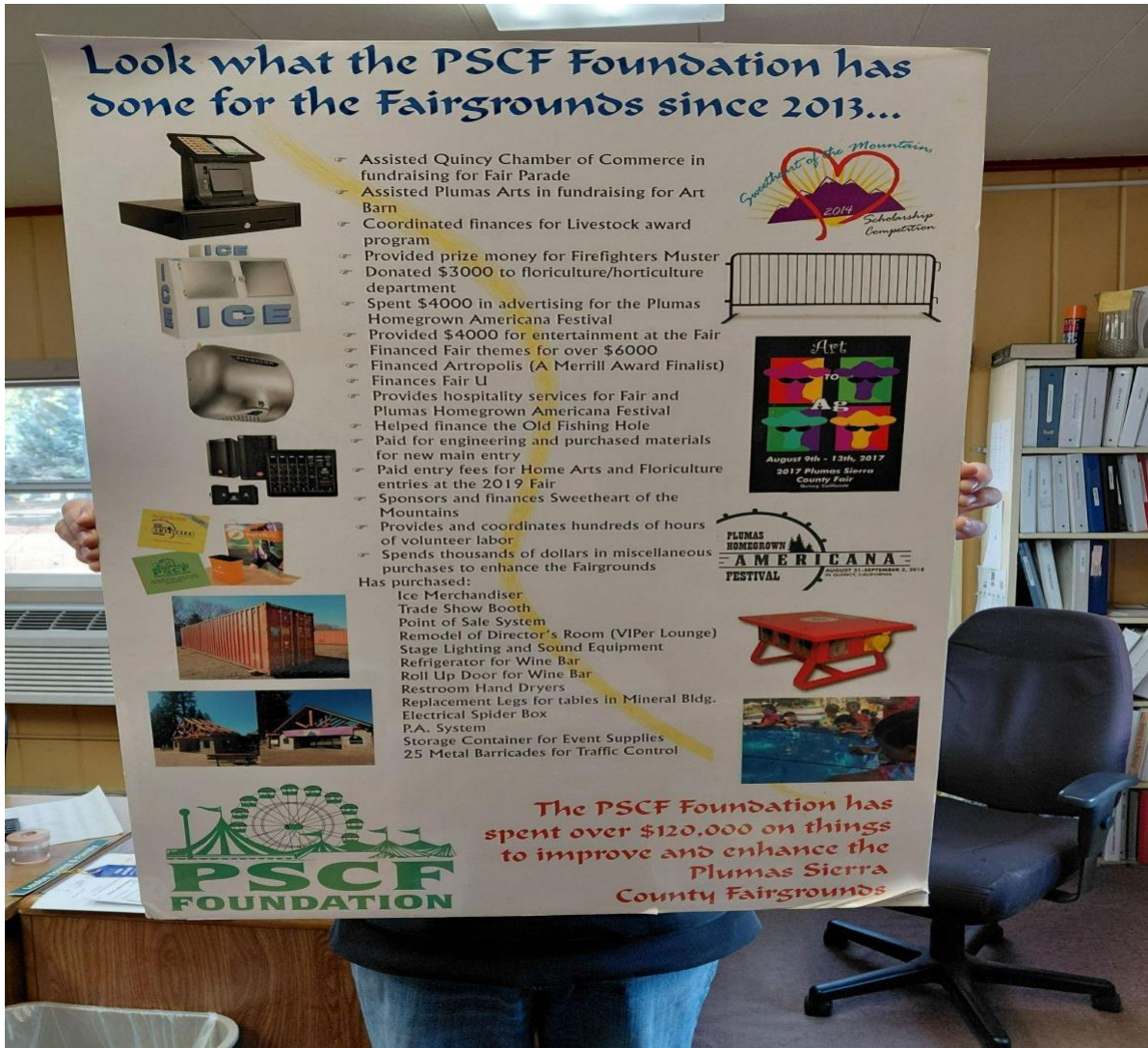
Revenues for the Fairgrounds come from a variety of sources and have remained consistent over the last three budget years following COVID, averaging \$436,477. An exception appears in FY 2025-26 with a \$598,999 transfer-in listed under line item 48000. These funds were previously transferred out for the construction of the new jail facility but were returned to the Fairgrounds budget.

In general, revenue totals are not sufficient to cover actual expenses for the Fairgrounds. Over the previous three fiscal years, the Fairgrounds has consistently operated with a deficit averaging \$338,606 per year. The Grand Jury was informed that these deficits were not taken from the County General Fund but were offset by monies received from the Fairgrounds' use as a fire camp and from COVID-related funding. These funds are now depleted.

Another source of funding, separate from the Fairgrounds/Fair budget, comes from the Plumas Sierra County Fair Foundation (PSCF Foundation) a non-profit organization formed by a group of dedicated individuals who support the Fair. Funds are obtained through membership dues, donations, and fundraising. The Foundation has been instrumental in funding projects that enhance the community's experience and appreciation of the Fair. In collaboration with the Fair Manager and the Building/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, the PSCF Foundation has made meaningful improvements to the Fairgrounds.

Fairgrounds Events

The Fairgrounds has a long history hosting events that bring the community together. In the 1980s and 1990s, performers such as Reba McEntire and Johnny Cash drew large audiences. Over the years, the Fairgrounds has hosted logging competitions and boxing matches, and the annual county Fair parade has traveled down Main Street since 1945. The Fairgrounds typically hosts more than 300 events each year. The Feather River College Rodeo is a popular event. Serpilio Hall hosts weekly pickleball games, and during the winter, roller-skating nights provide a fun, family-oriented activity. "Chippers" Christmas light display delights everyone during the holidays.



PSCF Foundation contributions since 2013, courtesy of Plumas County Director of Fair and Fairgrounds Events

The Fairgrounds faces several challenges this year. Since COVID, attendance has declined for most events. The High Sierra Music Festival has relocated to a different venue, and the Americana Festival is unlikely to return. Car races have steadily lost support and are discontinued, while many recent attempts to engage audiences have not drawn a crowd nor generated a profit.

Despite these challenges, the Fair continues to draw strong participation and enthusiasm among some groups, particularly 4-H, Future Farmers of America and equine groups. The Fairgrounds also regularly provides meeting space for local organizations and hosts weddings, graduations, and other special events. County, state and federal agencies use the Fairgrounds as a training facility and staging area during emergencies.

Fair Time

The Director of Fair and Fairground Events plays a pivotal role in organizing the annual Plumas Sierra County Fair. Historically held in August, the Fair was moved to July in 2022 to align with Trinity and Lassen County Fairs, ensuring a carnival provider and facilitating coordinated planning. The Fair is a substantial undertaking that requires months of advance preparation to ensure it operates smoothly. All areas of the Fairgrounds are used during the Fair, from the horse arena to the small animal barns and everywhere in between. Extra help is added during the summer to maintain the Fairgrounds, ensure safety, and address any issues that may occur during the Fair. Local groups, organizations, and individuals volunteer their time and expertise to support the Fair. The Director of Fair and Fairground Events and the Fair Board, a group of volunteers from Plumas and Sierra counties, work together to finalize a theme for the Fair and the exhibition schedule. The Fair board also provides volunteers during the Fair.

*Plumas Sierra County Fair 2026 theme
(Credit: Plumas Sierra County Fair Board)*



Conditions at the Fairgrounds

Conditions of the grounds and structures vary. Many of the buildings constructed in the 1950s and 1960s remain in use and require significant maintenance and repairs. The historic schoolhouse needs a new roof. The grandstand is showing partial wood rot, and the irrigation well needs a new tank. The administration building and its generator require updates. The horse arena and horse barns need significant improvements. Maintenance is performed by the singular Building/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, whose limited budget makes addressing large projects challenging. The PCCGJ discovered that formal preventive maintenance logs and a comprehensive list of capital improvement needs are not maintained.

Several refurbished buildings are standout features of the Fairgrounds. The Mineral Building is carpeted and cozy with a large stone fireplace. The Tulsa Scott building has large, bright windows and boasts a commercial kitchen. Serpilio Hall is sturdy and well-suited for large gatherings. Recently rebuilt, the entrance to the Fairgrounds looks polished and inviting. The pig barns have been improved, and new bathrooms have been installed near the horse arena. Some new generators are available as backup power sources in parts of the Fairgrounds, and improvements to the lower campground make it an attractive offering.

In general, the Fairgrounds is well kept and with thoughtful improvements could truly shine as a “Jewel of Plumas County”. The PCCGJ learned that some historic structures are under the control of the Plumas County Museum rather than the Fair Department, and the Administration Building is managed by County Facility Services.

Use as an Evacuation Facility and Fire Camp

The Fairgrounds has been designated as an evacuation center under the Office of Emergency Services, Emergency Operation Plan 2020, Annex B: Mass Care and Shelter. With this designation, the Fairgrounds can shelter people as well as large and small animals during forced evacuations and natural disasters. Shelter operations are managed by the Plumas County Department of Social Services in coordination with the Plumas County Sheriff's Office and the Plumas County Office of Emergency Services. The Plumas County Agricultural Department, under the authority of the Plumas County Animal Control Department, provides support for housing large and small animals at the Fairgrounds. The facility has been used several times in recent years for this purpose, most notably during the 2021 Dixie Fire. In fact, long after the conclusion of the fire, animals were abandoned which required volunteers to care for them until adoptive homes were found. This underscores the need for the horse barns to be restored to safe and good working order. New legislation, CA AB 478 (the FOUND Act), signed into law in October 2025 and effective January 1, 2026, will affect fairgrounds operations related to the rescue, sheltering, and release of domestic and farm animals during emergencies.

Historically, the Fairgrounds has been used as a fire camp, as well as a hub for fire suppression efforts. This role continues today. During the devastating 2021 Dixie Fire, the annual County Fair was canceled to accommodate a large fire camp and incident command post that housed thousands of firefighters for months. Again in 2024, during the Gold Complex Fire, the Fairgrounds hosted the Forest Service as it monitored lightning fires in Eastern Plumas County. The Fairgrounds received significant compensation from state and federal agencies for this use and have been operating on these funds for a few years. This funding is now depleted.

The Horse Arena and Horse Barns

In 1997, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Plumas County and the equestrian community, outlining the relocation of the horse arena from behind the National Guard Armory to the Fairgrounds (see Appendix A). Initially, the space in front of the grandstands served as the horse arena. However, as major entertainment events were booked, including the High Sierra Music Festival and American Valley Racing, the arena was relocated to a smaller site adjacent to the grandstands. Access to this equestrian center is provided to the residents of Plumas County at no charge but is subject to certain legal considerations including a liability waiver and insurance. The facility has nine horse barns, a holding pen, a warm-up area, and the main arena. The arena is used regularly by several entities, including the FRC Equine Studies Program, FRC Rodeo program, 4-H, FFA, High Mountain Riders, and others. A well-maintained 24-site camping area is located near the horse arena.

Due in significant part to the FRC Equine Studies Program, Plumas County is already well known in the equine community. The horse arena site at the Fairgrounds has potential for additional gatherings and activities; however, several constraints hinder its use. Of particular concern is the Horse Barn complex, constructed in 1958, which shows significant wear and tear including inadequate repairs, broken boards, rotting timbers, and other issues common to aging

horse barns. Similar conditions affect the arena where fences, bucking chutes, and adjacent standing areas require extensive repairs to be usable and safe. The floor of the arena is in good condition, having been refurbished following heavy use by fire camp teams. A warm-up area on the south side of the arena has since been washed out by storm damage.

Fairgrounds staff have limited equipment for maintaining the horse arena, and additional equipment is often temporarily provided by local organizations to make the arena usable. The High Mountain Riders, in collaboration with PSCF Foundation, is raising funds to purchase and donate a water truck to the Fairgrounds for arena use.



(left) damage to horse barn stall entry (center) bucking chutes standing area and fencing (right) damage inside stalls (Images courtesy of PCCGJ)

Alternate Sources of Funding

The Fairgrounds and the Plumas Sierra County Fair face significant financial and operational challenges. As noted, the Fairgrounds and Fair are not self-sustaining, with expenditures significantly exceeding revenues. The question remains: what options are available to support the Fairgrounds and provide for its future success?

Community members and local organizations have opportunities to seek additional funding in support of the Fairgrounds and the Horse Arena. Improvements to the equine center could encourage regional and state organizations to host their clinics, training, and events in Plumas County, providing a potential increase in revenue. Additional resources include grants (see Appendix B) and local fundraising efforts. While these are not short-term solutions, they could be realized through the efforts of a dedicated team of stakeholders.

Future Leadership and Knowledge Concerns

The Fairgrounds relies on experience-based knowledge that has not been fully documented. Without formal records and procedures, there is a risk that the departure of current staff could

result in a loss of institutional knowledge, leading to additional training requirements and potential inefficiencies.

FINDINGS

The Plumas County Civil Grand Jury Finds:

F1. The Fairgrounds' equine facilities - including the horse barns, arena fencing, bucking chutes and staging areas - are in poor condition, making them unsuitable for effective use by large animals.

F2. The lack of a dedicated, maintenance budget line item for the equine area limits repairs and improvements, limiting the number of equine events that could increase revenue for the Fairgrounds and benefit the county's economy.

F3. Many areas of the Fairgrounds require repair, maintenance and capital improvements, putting safety at risk, limiting community use, and hindering effective operations.

F4. The Building/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor is the only maintenance staff for most of the year, limiting the maintenance projects that can be accomplished.

F5. Extra help is hired during the summer and other seasons, but this labor is generally unskilled, limiting the scope of maintenance projects requiring more expertise.

F6. The loss of the Fiscal Coordinator position requires the Director of Fair and Fairground Events to perform all associated duties, increasing the risk of accounting irregularities during large events.

F7. There is no formal system for monitoring complaints or ensuring compliance for people or groups using the Fairgrounds, resulting in limited transparency, inconsistent follow-up, and reduced accountability.

F8. There is no formal system for tracking preventive or corrective maintenance – including projects, labor hours and associated costs – limiting the Fairgrounds' ability to reliably plan, budget, or prioritize repairs, and increasing the risk of equipment failure and unsafe conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plumas County Civil Grand Jury recommends:

R1. The Board of Supervisors form an ad hoc committee, including stakeholders from the equine community, finance, and facility services, to determine the best approach for improving the Fairgrounds' equine area and to plan funding for improvements. Suggested completion date January 1, 2027.

R2. The Board of Supervisors create a shared Fiscal Coordinator position to serve part time at the Fairgrounds and other departments as needed. Suggested completion date July 1, 2027.

R3. The Board of Supervisors support the Buildings/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor either by establishing a partnership between the Fairgrounds and County Facility Services or by hiring additional, year-round maintenance workers to assist with Fairgrounds maintenance and projects. Suggested completion date July 1, 2027.

R4. The Board of Supervisors direct the Director of Fair and Fairground Events to standardize office and fiscal procedures in accordance with County practices.

- Implement a formal complaint system to log complaints and their resolution
- Implement a maintenance project log to track man hours and actual costs of projects and capital improvements
- Implement a preventive maintenance system to document completion of seasonal maintenance and assist in scheduling of preventive maintenance items.

Suggested implementation date: prior to the 2027 Plumas Sierra County Fair.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Required Responses

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Plumas County Civil Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the Board of Supervisors (BOS)

- Findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4

Invited Responses

The Plumas County Civil Grand Jury invites responses as follows:

From the Director of Fair and Fairground Events:

- Findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
- Recommendation 4

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Plumas Sun article <https://plumassun.org/2025/07/25/plumas-past-sunshine-and-summertime/>
2. Plumas Sierra County Fair Building and Improvements 6/30/2024 (located in the Fair Office)
3. Plumas County Budget Book Fair Department 2025-26 FY
<https://stories.opengov.com/countyofplumasca/4a119082-9941-41db-9f72-03435a78cbb5/published/zl8xVhuTz?currentPageId=66d8bd2fd4da737bff1650df>
4. Fair Fiscal Coordinator job description
<https://www.plumascounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/2819>
5. Director of Fair and Fairground Events job description
<https://plumascounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/52826/Director-of-Fair-and-Fairground-Events-03-2026>
6. Building/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor II job description
<https://www.plumascounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/2903>
7. PSCF Foundation website <http://www.plumas-sierracountyfair.net/pscf-foundation.html>
8. Chippers Christmas <https://plumascounty.org/things-to-do/events/chippers-christmas-wonderland/>
9. Fair Managers guide book (located in the Fair Office)
10. EOP plan 2020 <https://www.plumascounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/3832>
11. CA AB478 The FOUND Act
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB478

APPENDIX A

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF PLUMAS AND THE EQUESTRIAN COMMUNITY - 1997

Since 1971 an organized group of horse owners and riders have been allowed to utilize County property in East Quincy, adjacent to the armory, for equestrian activities. The facility was named the "Sallie Alexander Arena". Understandably the users of the arena have assumed that they would be allowed to continue to use the arena for an indefinite period of time. It accommodated their needs and didn't cost the County anything. The arena is immediately adjacent to two Little League ball fields.

The Board of Supervisors in 1996 adopted a long-range strategy plan and theme for the County Fairgrounds to become a regional equestrian facility. The Board of Supervisors committed \$30,000 of seed money for that purpose. Since then, a new facility has been partially developed and is being used by the public. A second arena is needed, but the Little League ball field presently adjacent to the new arena is impeding the further implementation of the plan.

It has been Supervisors Coates' and Bresciani's goal to locate all equestrian activities at the Fairgrounds and consolidate the three Little League fields behind the State of California National Guard Armory in East Quincy, and the full Board agrees.

Initially, the horse owners and riders using the "Sallie Alexander" were concerned about leaving the arena and perhaps being forced to use a new but inferior facility, or even worse, have no facility at all. The intent of Plumas County Horsemen's Association was to ensure a free and open public access arena. The intent of the Board of Supervisors is to provide a free and open public use facility in Plumas County. Over a period of four months, meetings were held between a number of representatives of the Plumas County Horsemen's Association (PCHA) and Supervisors Bresciani and Coates, and trust and understanding was developed. Discretionary monies available to each of these Board Members was pledged to further develop the facility and incorporate many of the PCHA ideas. Ultimately, it became understood that everyone was on the same page and it was agreed to work together on the common goals benefiting both the equestrian and recreation communities.

It is important to the members of the equestrian community to have set forth a memorandum of understanding with the County on this issue. Hence, as evidence of the County's long-term commitment to an equestrian center, the Plumas County Board of Supervisors embraces and approves this MOU.

Condition Precedent to Relocation from the Sallie Alexander Arena

The timing for the consolidation of equestrian activities to the Fairgrounds shall depend on the County's installation of a new fence of 233' along what would be the easterly boundary of the equestrian area in order to secure it from the balance of the Fairgrounds. Thereafter, the equestrian activities at the Sallie Alexander will be transferred to, and planned activities will be scheduled through, the Plumas County Fairgrounds. It is agreed that the relocation shall not occur before August 10, 1997.

The Little League ball field immediately adjacent to the equestrian area at the Fairgrounds will be relocated as soon as possible, after the installation of the fence mentioned above, to the area behind the California National Guard Armory abutting the two existing Little League ball fields, and will occupy part or all of the area formally used by PCHA as an arena. The County will immediately undertake to plan and build a second arena at the Fairgrounds where the Little League ball field was located. PCHA members will be invited to participate in the planning.

Agreement As To Improvements. Use and Rules for the Plumas-Sierra County Equestrian Facility at the Fairgrounds

1. The equestrian facilities at the Fairgrounds shall be accessible to the general public free of charge, subject to certain rules and the execution of a use agreement and release and waiver of liability agreement for the use of the arena.
2. Individuals using the horse arena shall follow the rules which shall be posted by the County in a conspicuous place.
3. There shall be open gates on Lee Road for entrance to the Fairgrounds at both the north end and the walk-through gate on the south end.
4. The restrooms adjacent to the arena shall be available. The County may elect to lock the restrooms and may charge a reasonable fee and refundable deposit.
5. All participants using the equestrian area shall sign an agreement with the Plumas-Sierra County Fair for the use of the area, including a release and waiver of liability agreement. Spectators are not subject to these required agreements.
6. The County shall post a sign at the facility indicating that each person using the facility must have a valid use agreement and a release and waiver of liability agreements.
7. The County shall determine whether there is need to draft an ordinance for the Board's approval as reinforcement to the rule that one cannot ride at the facility unless there is a signed use agreement and a signed liability waiver.
8. With regard to camping in the equestrian area, only persons using the equestrian center are permitted to camp in the equestrian areas, except for specific dates known to the Fair, i.e., the week of the annual Plumas-Sierra County Fair, the BMW rally, County Picnic, Norton Motorcycle group and two others for a total of six events. Any number beyond six events will require the parties to meet in cooperative fashion and amend this MOU.

The purpose for this rule is to allow the Fair to manage the area so that there are not conflicts, dust, noise, traffic, etc., between folks who may be there for an equestrian event and campers unrelated to the event.
9. The name of the arena at the Fairgrounds will remain generic, such as the "Plumas-Sierra County Equestrian Center".

- No planned equestrian event may be reserved for less than five horses and/or five participants per day.
11. The use of the equestrian center shall be free to the public except for the use of stalls and campsites for which the County may charge a reasonable fee.
 12. A master calendar will be kept at the Fairgrounds on which all events and usages will be scheduled. Priority will be given to those events entered on a first come, first serve basis prior to January 31st of each year.
 13. The County and the equestrian community shall keep one another informed of any improvements, expansions, modifications or any other work needed in the arena.
 14. All clubs, groups, organizations and individuals are responsible to keep the area free of litter and shall leave the arena(s) in a condition ready for the next user.
 15. All clubs, groups or organizations using the arena shall provide a \$1,000,000 of comprehensive general liability insurance coverage for their sponsored events. The insurance policy shall contain an endorsement naming the County, its officers, employees, agents and volunteers as additional-named insured with respect to their use of the Plumas-Sierra Fair agencies and facilities, and those endorsements shall be filed with the Fair. The County will be responsible for liability during all other times.
 16. The PCHA desires to dedicate a tree and/or a plaque within the Fairgrounds equestrian area. The specific location of such items will be coordinated with the Fair.
 17. It is agreed that if problems arise and this memorandum of understanding needs to be discussed or amended, the parties will meet in cooperative fashion to resolve the issues and/or development amendments.
 18. If the arena at the Fairgrounds closes or becomes unavailable to the general public, the County will work with the equestrian community to find another location. The arena fencing currently at the Fairgrounds provided by Supervisor Bresciani is transferable to that new location.
 19. The PCHA will be informed prior to the old Sallie Alexander being dismantled and prepared for a Little League baseball field.

The agreement for the use of the horse arena and equestrian area, and the waiver of liability agreement are attached and included by reference in the MOU.

Signed and Agreed to this 17 day of June, 1997.

PLUMAS COUNTY:

Phillip A. Busciani
Chair, Plumas County Board
of Supervisors

PLUMAS-SIERRA COUNTY FAIR:

Mark [Signature]
Fair Manager

PLUMAS COUNTY
HORSEMEN'S ASSOCIATION:

Rosmani [Signature]
PCHA Co-Chair

APPENDIX B

Funding Sources and Grants (selected grants):

California Grants Portal (www.Grants.ca.gov)

Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>)

County Fairground Improvement Grant (<https://www.compeer.com/investing-in-rural-communities/giving-back/grants/county-fair-facility-grant>)

Ford Family Foundation Grants (<https://www.tfff.org/grants/eligibility/>)

CDFA grants (<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/FairsAndExpositions/fcrp/>)



Plumas County Fair Parade. Photo courtesy of Plumas County Museum.

DETENTION FACILITY INQUIRY STATEMENT



OVERVIEW

Penal Code section 919(b) obligates the Civil Grand Jury to “inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.” In 2022, the California Attorney General issued an opinion (No. 18-103) stating the term “public prisons” includes “local detention facilities,” and that a county or city jail is a typical example of such a local detention facility.

The purpose of this document is to provide information about how the 2025-26 Plumas County Civil Grand Jury fulfilled this duty.

While Penal Code section 919(b) requires this inquiry, it does not require the grand jury to investigate or to write a report about local detention facilities. In fact, a report cannot be written based solely upon an inquiry. To write a report, a full investigation is required and all the facts in the report must be verified. (See Penal Code section 939.9.)

LOCAL DETENTION FACILITIES WITHIN PLUMAS COUNTY

There is one local detention facility within Plumas County: the Plumas County Correctional Facility located at 56 Abernethy Lane, Quincy, CA 95971.

On October 1, 2025, Grand Jurors were given an overview and tour of the facility by the Plumas County Sheriff’s Office staff. No observations warranted further investigation by the jury.

CONCLUSION

The grand jury’s legal obligation to inquire into the condition and management of the local detention facility within the county was satisfied by touring the jail.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW OF GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS



Photo: Dedication of Plumas County Courthouse, 1921 (Courtesy of Plumas County Museum)

SUMMARY

Each year, the Plumas County Civil Grand Jury (PCCGJ) issues a final report describing its investigations into local government, including recommendations for improvement. Government agencies and officials are required to respond to the recommendations, but they are not required to report progress on any changes they agreed to make. The 2025-26 PCCGJ investigated the status of recommendations made in previous PCCGJ reports to determine if any changes had been made in response to earlier recommendations.

During the years 2022-2024, Plumas County officials/agencies agreed to implement 50% of the recommendations made by PCCGJ and disagreed with 25% of the recommendations. The remaining 25% recommendations either did not require a response (12.5%) or did not get a required response (12.5%). In 2025-2026, County officials/agencies had either implemented or were in the progress of implementing 92% of the recommendations they agreed to implement in earlier years.

BACKGROUND

At the conclusion of each one-year term, the PCCGJ issues a report summarizing its activities for the year. The report presents investigations completed during the term, setting forth findings and recommendations to promote efficiency, accountability and effectiveness of local government. California Penal Code section 933.05 requires affected agencies and officials to formally respond to the findings and recommendations within specific timeframes.

To promote continuity, the PCCGJ often reviews whether officials and agencies responded to the previous year's recommendations; however, given that some recommendations require a longer time to implement, the Jury is generally unable to monitor progress within a single year. This follow-up report addresses that limitation by examining earlier years' reports and requesting updates on previously issued recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

The PCCGJ reviewed reports and responses issued between 2022 and 2024. Although a 2020 report would have provided a broader review period, Plumas County did not impanel a Civil Grand Jury during the 2020–21 COVID-19 pandemic, and the 2021–22 Civil Grand Jury did not issue a report. As a result, earlier reports were unavailable for consideration.

The PCCGJ examined the status of recommendations where the responding entity indicated one of the following:

- *The recommendation is being implemented.*
- *The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be in the future.*
- *The recommendation requires further analysis.*

Recommendations were not included if the responding entity indicated that they had already been implemented, could not reasonably be implemented, or if they disagreed with the findings, because the purpose of the follow-up was to see what progress has been made on recommendations that officials and agencies agreed to implement.

The PCCGJ sent letters to County agencies and officials in early November 2025, describing the purpose of the follow-up report and asking for updated responses to the recommendations. Follow-up emails were sent to officials in late November and again in December. The PCCGJ also conducted limited interviews with some officials.

Follow-up responses were requested from the same entities who responded to recommendations in earlier reports: the Board of Supervisors, the Assessor, the Treasurer/Tax Collector, the Auditor, and Child Protective Services.

DISCUSSION

The PCCGJ reports issued from 2022 through 2024 contained four investigation reports, with a total of 18 recommendations. In the 2023-24 report titled “A Call for Accountability,” three of the recommendations were sent to three different officials. Since responses could differ depending on the official, each recommendation is counted three times for purposes of follow-up, resulting in a total of 24 recommendations.

At the time the reports were issued, County officials agreed to implement 12 (50%) of the recommendations. They did not agree with six (25%) of the recommendations, and the remaining six did not have responses.

Of the 12 recommendations County officials agreed to implement, three had already been implemented at the time of the initial response and did not require follow-up. The PCCGJ requested follow-up responses for the remaining nine recommendations in addition to the three recommendations that did not have the required response in 2023-2024 (A Call for Accountability), resulting in 12 recommendations needing follow-up.

The table shows each PCCGJ investigation report and year, the number of recommendations from each report, and the official responses to recommendations when they were issued.

Recommendations by Report	Do Not Agree	Agree: Has Been Impl.*	Agree: Is Being Impl.	Agree: Will Impl.	NR**	RNR* **	Total
A Perfect Storm: Using Transparency to Clear the Air (2022-23)	3	1	0	1	0	0	5
A Call for Accountability (2023-24)	3	2	1	4	3	0	13
Keeping All Our Children Safe (2023-24)	0	0	0	3	0	1	4
The Many Faces of Plumas County Recycling (2023-24)	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total	6	3	1	8	3	3	24
Percent	25%	12.5%	4.2%	33.3%	12.5%	12.5%	100%

*Implemented; **No Response; ***Response not requested

In 2025-26, all officials submitted follow-up responses reporting the status of the recommendations. Of the 12 recommendations officials agreed to implement, 10 (84%) had either been implemented or were in the process of being implemented.

The Board of Supervisors responded that one recommendation (Recommendation R3, 2023-24, regarding the hiring of a fiscal officer) needed further study, and that they did not have the authority to respond to another recommendation (Recommendation R2, 2023-24, regarding the Treasurer Oversight Committee). However, as of February, 2026, this subject had been addressed by the Board of Supervisors (see note in responses on following pages.)

FINDINGS

A review of follow-up responses indicates that Plumas County officials are generally willing to implement the Grand Jury's recommendations, although the pace of implementation may vary depending on the complexity of the recommendation. Some responses suggest that the Grand Jury's recommendations were too broad or unclear.

Recommendations, with initial and follow-up responses, are shown in the following pages. Note that recommendations and responses have not been edited since they are taken directly from previous reports or from official responses.

A Perfect Storm: Using Transparency to Clear the Air (2022-2023)

Recommendation R4: The Grand Jury recommends that the CAO publish all salary and wage changes for county employees in the past 10 years on the county's website, following the approach used by Glenn County.

Original (2022-2023) Response: "Though directed to the CAO, the Board of Supervisors appreciates the intent of the recommendation; however, as Human Resources is the source of salary and wage information, it would properly fall under Human Resources. Plumas County Human Resources maintains salary and wage changes, which are available for public review pursuant to California Code of Regulations section 570.5 and CalPERS Circular Letter: 200-0002-20. Wage information from 2020 on is available on the Human Resources page of the Plumas County website, and additional wage information for Plumas County employees is also available from a variety of online sources. Researching past wages and creating wage tables for past employee wages is not a beneficial use of employee time as that information is publicly available from other sources.

"However, the *recommendation will be implemented on an ongoing basis* [emphasis added] so that past wage information will continue to be available until the County has ten years of data available."

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: "Currently the Plumas County Human Resources Department has Publicly Available Pay Scales (PAPS) posted from July 14th, 2020, to the most current updated pay scales approved and adopted on January 6th, 2026 (resolution #26-9097) giving us five and a half years worth of PAPS, meeting CalPERS compliance of having 5 years publicly available.

“The Human Resources Department does have paper records of the pay scales as of November 2nd, 2015 to October 8th, 2019, that are available upon request. They're not posted online as they don't meet CalPERS compliance as was determined in the Audit performed by CalPERS in 2018/2019.”

A Call for Accountability: Putting the Public's Interest First (2023-2024)

Board of Supervisors

Recommendation R2: The Grand Jury recommends that the BOS direct the Treasurer/Tax Collector to use the option within the Investment Policy to reinstate the Treasurer Oversight Committee by November 1, 2024.

Original (2023-2024) Response: “The Board of Supervisors agrees to place this matter on the agenda for October 8, 2024, for a vote on the reinstatement of the Treasurer Oversight Committee.”

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: “The County and Board have no authority over the Treasurer-Tax Collector to direct a response to Recommendation R-2.”

[**Note:** On February 6, 2026, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors, along with the Treasurer-Tax Collector, submitted a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve the size and composition of the Treasurer Oversight Committee (TOC), announce a notice of vacancy for members of the public interested in serving on the Committee, approve a process by which potential nominees could submit their interest, and place an item on the February 17, 2026, to discuss potential TOC members.]

Recommendation R3: The Grand Jury recommends that the BOS follow the recommendations from the accounting firm Clifton, Larson & Allen (CLA) including the hiring of a fiscal officer or administrative assistant to assist the CAO's office by October 1, 2024.

Original (2023-2024) Response: “The Board of Supervisors agrees. Request in budget for fiscal officer already in the recommended budget for the fiscal year of 2024 and 2025.”

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: “During the FY 2024–25 midyear budget and the FY 2025–26 budget development, the County did not have a CAO or fiscal officer in place. The budget process was conducted by a committee of two Board members and key department heads, with individual budget meetings held with each department. This resulted in a clear, transparent, and effective budget process. The County Auditor provided a calendar of key dates and procedural guidance, supporting timely completion. This experience demonstrated that the County was able to complete the budget process effectively without a CAO or fiscal officer through good process, direct communication with relevant departments, and teamwork. The need for a fiscal officer or other staff to support the CAOs office in the budget process may be dependent on the experience and skills of a CAO to fulfill the Budget Officer responsibilities. When a new CAO is in place,

recommendations regarding the need for a fiscal officer or other administrative support will be evaluated based on the CAO's experience, qualifications and needs. A CAO with county budget experience may be able to fulfill their Budget Officer role in partnership with the Auditors office without the addition of specialized fiscal staff."

County Assessor

The County Assessor's office did not submit required responses to recommendations in 2023-2024. All follow up responses for this report are shown below.

Recommendation R4: The Grand Jury recommends that the mission statements, and policies and procedures be updated in the Assessor's Office, the Auditor Controller's Office, and the Treasurer/Tax Collector's Office by December 1, 2024.

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: "I'm not sure what the Grand Jury is looking for as our mission has not changed. Please see the attached Policies and Procedures, this document is updated as needed – mostly when we have a change in processing digitally. This request is very broad."

Recommendation R5: The Grand Jury recommends that all job descriptions in Treasurer/Tax Collector, Auditor and Assessor offices include experience and competencies in using digital platforms by June 30, 2025.

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: "All of our job descriptions include tracking and updating our data, which is in digital form. This request is very broad."

Recommendation R6: The Grand Jury recommends that the conversion to the use of digital platforms in the above stated offices be completed by December 1, 2024.

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: "We are converting to using digital platforms as necessary and in my budget. There are duties in my Department that require direct analysis and duties being done by hand. This request is very broad."

Auditor/Controller

Recommendation R5: The Grand Jury recommends that all job descriptions in Treasurer/Tax Collector, Auditor and Assessor offices include experience and competencies in using digital platforms by June 30, 2025.

Original (2023-2024) Response: "The Auditor Controllers Office is willing to work with Human Resources to update and review all job descriptions in the Auditor Controllers Office. Any updates to job descriptions for any county positions require the involvement of the Human Resources department."

Follow-up (2025-2026) Response: “The Auditor-Controller’s Office continues to coordinate with the Human Resources Department regarding updates to job descriptions to ensure experience and competency in digital platforms are included. Progress on this effort was delayed due to the vacancy in the Human Resource Director position. With the recent hiring of a new Human Resource Director, this work has resumed and is moving forward. The Auditor-Controller anticipates completing the job description updates within the current fiscal year.”

Recommendation R6: The Grand Jury recommends that the conversion to the use of digital platforms in the above stated offices be completed by December 1, 2024.

Original (2023-2023) Response: “The Auditor Controller Office is utilizing digital platforms to complete its work. There are plans to increase the use of our existing digital platforms, such as Tyler Munis, to implement digital workflows for all claim processes including accounts payable and payroll. However, these improvements are not the most pressing needs at the current time. They are on our list of projects, and we will do our best to get them implemented in the future. December 1, 2024, is an unrealistic date for the level of complexity involved in these projects. In addition, these projects will require the involvement of many departments, much setup and a lot of testing before they can be implemented.”

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: “The Auditor-Controller’s Office has successfully implemented multiple digital platforms to support and streamline daily operations. Additionally, the department has actively assisted several County departments in adopting the digital functions available within the Tyler Enterprise ERP system. Full implementation across departments is an ongoing process that requires internal adoption and continued collaboration.

“The digital workflows and record-retention systems within the Auditor-Controller’s Office have proven to be efficient and effective for document research, processing, and long-term storage. Furthermore, shared digital sites have been developed to support interdepartmental communication and record sharing. Efforts are ongoing, to onboard key additional departments to utilize these shared systems fully.”

Treasurer-Tax Collector

Recommendation R6: The Grand Jury recommends that the conversion to the use of digital platforms in the above stated offices be completed by December 1, 2024.

Original (2023-2024) Response: “The Treasurer is moving forward with the implementation of the Tyler Munis software and the Sympro software.”

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: “The Treasurer-Tax Collector is currently implementing the Sympro investment software and starting to download investment data as well as entering daily transactions. The next step is to integrate with the Tyler Munis software so the investment activity is merged with the financial system.

“The Treasurer-Tax Collector and Auditor will be working towards additional Tyler Munis software that will allow the Treasury balances to integrate with the financial software currently being used. The Treasury module was never purchased when the Tyler Munis software was originally purchased.”

Keeping All Our Children Safe: It Takes a Village (2023-2024)

Child Protective Services (CPS)

Recommendation R1: The Grand Jury recommends that the CPS policy manual be completely reviewed and rewritten including an Index, Table of Contents and be electronically available by June 2025.

Original (2023-2024) Response: “The Department will review the contents of the manual to ensure the contents are policies and procedures; as previously stated, the Department will be reviewing and revising all policies and procedures. The Department will review the manual yearly and ensure the manual is updated; however, Division 31 Regulations are reviewed, and All-County-Letters are issued from the state as policies or practices change, therefore the manual is a fluid document and may not change unless changes are made at the state/federal level. The new manual will include an index, and/or a Table of Contents and will be electronically available by the June 2025 deadline.”

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: “Due to turnover and extended vacancies within the Department, previously stated deadlines have not been met. The Department is currently reviewing the policies and procedures and is in the process of updating with revised information, processes and regulations. The Department contracted with UC Davis and 10 draft policies and procedures have been written and are being reviewed for approval. Once all policies and procedures have been approved, the Table of Contents, and the policies and procedures will be made electronically available. The Department will review annually and will make revisions as required due to Division 31 Regulation changes and/or policy and practice changes issued through All-County-Letters.”

Recommendation R3: The Grand Jury recommends that the website include a complete report to the BOS and the public on the status of CPS by October 2024.

Original (2023-2024) Response: “The Acting Director shall provide the CAO, BOS, and publish on the website a report that indicates the status of CPS by October 2024.”

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: “The acting Director will provide the BOS a report that indicates the status of CPS by April 30, 2026 and quarterly thereafter. The report will also be made available on the Department's website.”

Recommendation R4: The Grand Jury recommends that the MOU currently in place with other agencies be followed as written.

Original (2023-2024) Response: “The AB2083 Committee and subcommittee have every intention to continue to meet in accordance with the spirit and intent of AB2083, but more importantly to meet the needs of the community and families of Plumas County.”

Follow-Up (2025-2026) Response: “The AB2083 Committee has been meeting regularly and continues to do so with a scheduled meeting in January 2026.”