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4. TCSO was the first law enforcement agency in California to use Smart Water technology (property identification).
5. TCSO is the only law enforcement agency in California to use Leap Frog technology (3D investigative technology).
6. The Sheriff's Public Outreach Team has been established to involve community members.
7. New technology is being utilized in the jail system to improve safety and security.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The cold case detectives have approximately 200 unsolved homicide cases, with the oldest dating back to 1969.
- F2. The cyber-crimes unit has submitted 248 cases to the Office of the District Attorney for prosecution since January, 2016.
- F3. The current evidence room is approximately 7,000 square feet, not including the numerous seatrain containers also being used. All areas are filled to capacity and some are deteriorating. The new evidence room will be in excess of 10,000 square feet with climate control. Scanner/barcode technology will be used to maintain the inventory.
- F4. New technologies being implemented include Smart Water property marking, Leap Frog 3D visualization for evidence collection, and the use of drones for the K-9 teams.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

None.

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

None Required.

Disclaimer

Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Section 911, 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Section 924.2 and 929).

VISALIA LANDFILL: “NOT A STINKY OPERATION”

BACKGROUND:

Tulare County has eight major cities that are serviced by Tulare County Waste Management: Dinuba, Farmersville, Tulare, Exeter, Lindsay, Porterville, Visalia and Woodlake; as well as six transfer stations for other outlying areas. After the 1950’s, waste disposal became a major issue due to mandates from the Environmental Protection Agency and Assembly Bill 939, which requires all California landfills to reduce waste by 50% by year 2000. Adopted in 1996, Tulare County Ordinance 3335 requires all licensed contract disposal carriers reduce their waste by 35%.

The biggest impact on waste disposal is tires and mattresses, which are moved off site for proper disposal. Currently, there are only two operating landfills in Tulare County: Visalia Municipal Solid Waste Landfill (VMSWL), operating on 631 acres, and Teapot Dome Landfill (TDL), operating on 127 acres. TDL has a projected life expectancy of 7 years before closing. Of the two, VMSWL is the one that is closest to water, the St. Johns River. VMSWL operation does not have any impact on the river, nor on the closest domestic and commercial wells, which are one mile from the facility.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION:

The 2016/2017 Grand Jury initiated an investigation to determine compliance with operation and maintenance of the VMSWL.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

- Inspected VMSWL
- Reviewed documents
- Conducted interviews

FACTS:

1. In 1989, the state mandated diversion rate was 50% of all waste taken to the landfill.
2. The state mandated diversion for 2017 increased to 65%.
3. The state mandated diversion will increase to 75% in 2020.
4. The VMSWL currently uses one lined dump area.

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5. Once shut down, dump areas continue to be monitored for gas emissions and flooding.
6. An additional dump area is under construction.
7. Landfills are inspected monthly by the local enforcement agency and by the State Water Board once a year.
8. VMSWL is self-sustaining through fees collected for refuse and recyclable materials.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The VMSWL met the state mandated diversion rate of 50%.
- F2. It is anticipated that the VMSWL will meet the increased 65% diversion mandate.
- F3. VMSWL personnel inspect the facility daily.
- F4. The following personnel play key roles in the maintenance and operation of VMSWL:
 - a. Refuse Site Coordinator
 - b. Fiscal Manager
 - c. Solid Waste Sustainability Program Coordinator
 - d. Solid Waste Environmental Coordinator
- F5. Materials transported to the landfill must be properly secured.
- F6. Specific areas are designated for recyclable materials that are picked up by other companies.
- F7. The VMSWL is well organized and operates efficiently.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. Explore a memorandum of understanding with the Tulare County Sheriff's Office to supply inmate workers for the landfill to ensure it remains self-sustaining and provide additional workforce when needed.

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

1. Tulare County Solid Waste Department (F1-7 and R1)