



**2011-2012  
Madera County Grand Jury  
Final Report  
Madera County Road Department**

**2011-2012**  
**Madera County Grand Jury**  
**Final Report**  
**Madera County Road Department**

**Introduction:**

The Madera County Road Department is under the umbrella of the County Resource Management Agency (RMA) and is directed by the Road Commissioner. The Department is responsible for the maintenance and construction of over 1,800 miles of roads and approximately 170 bridges within the county. Its current budget is over \$17.8 million, financed primarily by State and Federal allocations with the balance coming from special districts and local special tax measures.

The Grand Jury selected the Road Department for review because it had not been evaluated for over three years. In addition to interviewing Department management and staff, the Grand Jury visited the facilities located in Madera. The Grand Jury also observed a bid opening process for a \$6 million project.

**Findings:**

1. The Grand Jury found that the Road Department is authorized 86 positions, of which approximately 11 are vacant.
2. The Grand Jury found that there are two major divisions within the Department: the Engineering & Traffic Division and the Maintenance & Operations Division (M&O). In addition, there is a small administrative and accounting support unit.
3. The Grand Jury found that the Department's support unit assists with the administrative work and accounting of the other RMA departments.
4. The Grand Jury found that road repair priorities are established by safety issues, traffic volume, and road condition.
5. The Grand Jury found that the contract awarding process follows Federal, State, and local contracting requirements. There has been only one formal protest in the last 5 years.
6. The Grand Jury found that the Department's Engineering Division provides complete contracting processes including request for proposal, bid review, award, and project oversight.
7. The Grand Jury found that the Engineering Division, by performing more projects in-house, has reduced costs. In-house project completion has increased from an average of 5 in past years to 10 projects completed in 2011.
8. The Grand Jury found that the Department uses current communications technology and automation.

- a. Online processes are provided for reporting road repair issues.
  - b. Twitter and Facebook are used to communicate with the public.
9. The Grand Jury found that within the M&O Division there are 5 road crews, a weed abatement crew, and a graffiti removal crew.
    - a. Three of the road crews work from outlying yards in Raymond, Chowchilla, and North Fork.
    - b. Two road crews plus the weed abatement and graffiti removal crews report daily to the Almond Avenue Yard in Madera.
    - c. A crew is comprised of 5 to 7 workers.
  10. The Grand Jury found that in-house work consists of smaller repairs, shoulder grading, blacktop overlay, culvert installation, drainage issues, minor bridge repairs, road signage, weed abatement, and graffiti and litter removal.
  11. The Grand Jury found that the M&O Division is aware of the need for additional training of workers in current road repair materials and methodologies.
  12. The Grand Jury found that there have been no recent feasibility studies regarding lease versus purchase of heavy equipment.
  13. The Grand Jury found that the Road Shop maintains 270 vehicles and other pieces of equipment, including:
    - a. 71 vehicles (sedans, vans, SUVs, and various pickup trucks), 6 of which are being surplus for disposal;
    - b. 16 pickup trucks and 3 small sedans which operate on compressed natural gas (CNG), limiting their range due to lack of available fueling facilities; and
    - c. some pickup trucks which have special equipment installed for specific duties such as weed spraying, sign installation and removal, vehicle recovery, and arrow displays for safety of road crews.
  14. The Grand Jury found that Department mechanics are not properly trained to repair the modern equipment.
  15. The Grand Jury found that both County Central Garage and the Road Shop perform repair and maintenance of sedans, vans, and light pickup trucks.
  16. The Grand Jury found that there are no Road Department policies or procedures for vehicle pre-operation checks, e.g., oil level, tire inflation, and visual safety inspection.
  17. The Grand Jury found that the Almond Avenue Yard has experienced vandalism and theft.

### **Conclusions:**

1. The Grand Jury concluded that the Road Department is well managed and making progress toward becoming a modern, efficient department.

2. The Grand Jury concluded that road repair priorities are properly and fairly established.
3. The Grand Jury concluded that the Department's contracting processes are open and fair.
4. The Grand Jury concluded that the Department is making good use of technology to reduce costs and enhance efficiency.
5. The Grand Jury concluded that Department mechanics need updated training to repair the newer equipment.
6. The Grand Jury concluded that the Almond Avenue Yard lacks adequate security.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Grand Jury recommends that the M&O Division develop and implement a training program for road crews in the latest methods and materials for road maintenance.
2. The Grand Jury recommends that the County conduct a study to determine the feasibility of having Department sedans, vans, and light pickup trucks serviced and maintained by Central Garage.
3. The Grand Jury recommends that the Department conduct a study on the costs and benefits of lease versus purchase for future heavy equipment procurement.
4. The Grand Jury recommends that the Department adopt the pre-operation inspection policy and procedures for vehicle operators as published by Central Garage.
5. The Grand Jury recommends that additional security, e.g., video surveillance, be implemented at the Almond Avenue Yard.

**Respondent:** written response required pursuant to PC 933(c)

Madera County Board of Supervisors  
200 W. Fourth St.  
Madera, CA 93637

**Informational:** response optional

Madera County Road Commissioner  
2037 W. Cleveland Ave.  
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Resource Management Agency Director  
2037 W. Cleveland Ave.  
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Central Garage Supervisor  
14355 Road 28  
Madera, CA 93638