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**2012-2013
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
Environmental Health**

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Introduction:

The Madera County Environmental Health Department, located in the Madera County Resources Management Agency (RMA), 2037 West Cleveland Avenue, Madera, California, was selected because it has been nine years since it was last reviewed.

The Madera County Environmental Health Department's (EH) mission is to enhance the public's health through the control of potentially harmful materials, organisms, fuel sources, and conditions in the environment. The term "health" is used in its broadest context to mean not just the absence of disease, but rather a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being.

To accomplish their mission, the Madera County EH Department is in charge of implementing the following State mandated programs through either inspections and/or issuance of permits:

Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act	Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA)	Clean Drinking Water Program
Food Safety and Consumer Protection	Hazardous Materials/Business Response Plans
Ground Water and Soil Cleanup	Liquid Waste
Household Hazardous Waste	Solid Waste Program
Medical Waste and Body Art	Underground Storage Tanks
Public and Recreational Health	

The Grand Jury accompanied EH representatives as they inspected four eating establishments in the City of Madera, three ground water (safe drinking water) inspections in Ahwahnee and one underground storage tank inspection in the City of Madera. Numerous interviews were also conducted.

The organizational structure of Madera County EH varies from other counties in the State. Madera County EH department collaborates with the Public Health Department instead of reporting directly to them.

Facts:

1. The majority of funding for The Madera County EH Department is from the issuance of Environmental Health Fees billed yearly and from user fees billed at a rate of \$105 per hour.

2. Operational monies allocated from the County General Fund is about 2% of the EH budget.
3. EH oversees 200 water systems in the county and coordinates the Special Water Districts with County Engineers for inspections of drinking water quality.
4. EH staffing consists of 11 full time employees, 2 part time, 1 job share, 3 summer volunteers, 3 extra help interns that have yet to gain their State of California certification, and one clerk position that is shared 50% of the time with another department.
5. The EH Department is subject to the Madera County Board of Supervisors mandated furlough program occurring two Fridays a month.
6. At least one EH employee is on call 24/7 to respond in the event of an environmental emergency.
7. Each employee is required to be certified by the State and have a degree in Environmental Health Sciences or be enrolled in the intern program.
8. Madera County previously had a high turnover of EH employees.
9. All food service providers must be inspected annually. This includes restaurants, food trucks, fair vendors, etc.
10. Inspectors must hand write the results during the course of their inspections. After returning to their office, inspectors must manually enter this information into a State database.
11. Computer tablets to be used during onsite inspections are being researched by the Information Technology (IT) Department with input from EH.
12. Each food service provider must pay an annual fee to receive their operating permit.
13. New food service establishment plans for kitchen equipment and layout must be approved by EH. Replacement equipment for current establishments must also be approved.
14. Madera County has no restaurant/market grading system.

FINDINGS

1. The agency is unable to complete all required inspections due to staffing shortages and duplicate processes.

2. Missed inspections jeopardize the health and safety of the public at large.
3. Each inspection observed was professionally accomplished following strict guidelines.
4. The use of computer tablets will increase the number of inspections completed.
5. EH Department was awarded a California Environmental Reporting System one-time grant for the procurement of computer tablets. The State agency did not appropriate the funds last fiscal year. Distribution has been extended to June 30, 2013.
6. Outstanding leadership and teamwork was found in the EH Department resulting in the most effective use of available resources and great employee morale. Inspectors were helpful and professional in their dealings with the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury Recommends:

1. Computer tablets be purchased for the EH Team prior to the June 30, 2013 funding deadline.
2. The Board of Supervisors approve the implementation of EH's recommended restaurant grading system.
3. The EH department be recognized and commended for its outstanding leadership and management.

Respondents:

Board of Supervisors
200 West Fourth Street
Madera, CA 93637

Director, EH Department
2037 West Cleveland Avenue
Madera, CA 93637

Director, IT Department
200 West Fourth Street
Madera, CA 93637

Informational:

Planning Director
2037 West Cleveland Avenue
Madera, CA 93637