



EST. 1851

# PLACER COUNTY SHERIFF CORONER-MARSHAL

MAIN OFFICE  
2929 RICHARDSON DR.  
AUBURN, CA 95603  
PH: (530) 889-7800 FAX: (530) 889-7899

TAHOE SUBSTATION  
DRAWER 1710  
TAHOE CITY, CA 96145  
PH: (530) 581-6300 FAX: (530) 681-6377



EDWARD N. BONNER  
SHERIFF-CORONER-MARSHAL

DEVON BELL  
UNDERSHERIFF

**To:** Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Edward N. Bonner, Sheriff-Coroner-Marshall *ENB*  
**Date:** March 25, 2008  
**Subject:** Sheriff's Department Dispatch Services Assessment Request

### REQUESTED ACTION

Approval is requested to use the County procurement process to retain the services of a specialized consulting firm to conduct an organization assessment of the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Services unit and provide recommendations to improve organization effectiveness. This assessment, as described in more detail below, would include analysis of: organizational structure, operational practices, management practices, classifications, recruitment strategies, employment exams; current POST requirements, training programs and policies.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years, effective recruitment and retention of public safety communications employees has been identified as a critical issue nation-wide. In a recent study conducted by the International Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, it was reported that the majority of agencies were reporting concern over the unusually high employee turnover rates and a lack of qualified applicants. As a result, a four year comprehensive study was conducted which included public safety communication centers nation-wide. While recruitment and retention were identified as the most prevalent causes for the current crisis, organizational structure, workload management/staffing, classification, compensation, working conditions, and training were also recognized as critical elements. The Sheriff's Department Dispatch Services organization faces these same challenges. For some time the department has had difficulty keeping its two dispatch centers adequately staffed. A review of the nation-wide study results and recommendations, the dispatch staffing situation at Placer County, and meetings with CEO staff and County Personnel regarding the need for this study, identified several additional areas in need of review: operational efficiencies and effectiveness for both the Auburn and Tahoe Dispatch Centers, organizational structure, management policies and practices, job classifications, workflow and communications with other Sheriff Department units and with partner agencies, and an analysis of regional disaster response capabilities and practices.

### PROPOSED ORGANIZATION ASSESSMENT SCOPE

The scope of the proposed study would include a comprehensive analysis of the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Services division compared to industry best practices for

emergency dispatch operations in a law enforcement environment as well as recommendations and an implementation plan for actions to be taken to improve organizational effectiveness. Specific areas to be analyzed would include:

- A review of general operations and organizational structure, including reporting relationships, current vs. industry best practices related to organizational effectiveness, communication practices and interface between Dispatch and other related functional units (such as Records) for impacts to workflow and effectiveness.
- Review current dispatch operational model to optimize operational/organization efficiencies and best management practices.
- Review and update all current class series and specifications as deemed necessary.
- Review of general management practices, including schedules, performance requirements, communication/morale, rewards/incentives, assessment of current turnover rates and identification of potential solutions for retention.
- Analyze regional disaster response capabilities and practices.
- Review recruitment process, including outreach, testing, and selection process.
- Analysis, evaluation and improvement of current training programs and practices to enhance recruitment and retention efforts, including Public Safety Dispatch Training Officer Program, POST and other required training, and tools and guidelines available to staff trainers and trainees.

#### **INTENDED OUTCOME**

The desired goal is to ensure that the Sheriff's Department Dispatch services are being managed in a manner that supports our department's mission statement and core values while providing optimum emergency services to the public in the most efficient way possible. The Study Steering Committee will consist of management staff from the Sheriff's Department, Personnel Department and County Executive Office.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

It is anticipated that the funding for this study will be covered by unspent salaries of vacant public safety dispatchers within the Fiscal Year 07/08 budget. We believe that ultimately there will be a savings to the county by reducing the turnover rate and minimizing recruiting costs. We are expecting, based on the study and implementation, to expend less money in the future on background investigations, training compensation, overtime coverage, and employee claims.