



County of Santa Cruz

AUDITOR-CONTROLLER'S OFFICE
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January 10, 2006

Board Agenda: January 24, 2006

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

County of Santa Cruz
 701 Ocean Street
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060

SUBJECT: WHISTLEBLOWER HOTLINE ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Members of the Board:

Pursuant to the Santa Cruz County Policies and Procedures Manual section VII 700, this report provides statistical information on the 2005 calendar year Whistleblower Hotline activity from the Hotline's start date of May 25, 2005 through December 31, 2005.

The Whistleblower Hotline is intended for Santa Cruz County residents, vendors, contractors and employees to report fraud, waste and abuse. The reported incident must relate to the County and include fraudulent activity by Santa Cruz government employees; misuse of County resources by vendors, contractors or County employees; or significant violations of County policy.

The Auditor-Controller receives and investigates Whistleblower Hotline reports. To enable the reporting of these activities, the Auditor-Controller's Office maintains a Whistleblower Hotline at 831-454-3333, a reporting website in both English and Spanish which is accessed via the County's web page, and accepts written reports at 701 Ocean Street, Room 100.

For the reporting period, thirty-one total contacts were received. Of the contacts received, four were transmitted by letter, seventeen by phone call, and ten were received on the Hotline's webpage report form. Seven of the contacts received were determined to be outside of the scope of the program, and four of the contacts were general questions, which were either answered or referred to the appropriate resource. Of the remaining twenty contacts, twelve are considered closed and resolved, and eight are open and have been referred to the appropriate department or agency to

investigate and return to the Auditor-Controller with their findings. Of the twelve reports that have been investigated and closed, five were determined to be unsubstantiated, and seven involved some level of response.

Examples of the types of reports that have been made on the Whistleblower Hotline through the thirty-one contacts received during 2005 include allegations of: welfare or child support fraud; violations of the County's land use ordinances; employee parking or vehicle misuse; animal abuse; various personnel related-issues; cash handling procedures at a vendor's site; performance of a County contractor, and inconsistent application of local ordinances, fines and penalties.

The Whistleblower Hotline has become a successful addition to the County's internal controls, due in part to the willingness of County departments and other agencies to investigate and report back on their findings.

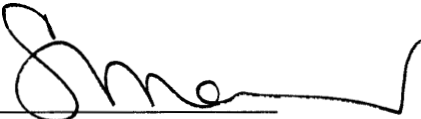
It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the Board of Supervisors accept and file this report on the Whistleblower Hotline activity for calendar year 2005.

Sincerely,



Mary Jo Walker
Auditor-Controller

RECOMMENDED:



SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

Copy to: County Administrative Officer