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# City of La Mesa

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SAN DIEGO  
COUNTY GRAND JURYART MADRID  
Mayor

July 26, 2006

The Honorable Janis Sammartino, Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of California, County of San Diego  
P.O. Box 122724  
San Diego, CA 92102-2724

Re: Grand Jury Report on "Felony Warrants – The Unsolved Problem"

Dear Judge Sammartino:

On June 1, 2006 the San Diego County Grand Jury released its report on "Felony Warrants – The Unsolved Problem", which included a number of findings and recommendations for local government and law enforcement agencies. State law requires that any public agency that the Grand Jury has reviewed, and about which it has issued a final report, provide comments to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the agency. This letter will provide the comments for the City of La Mesa, signed by Mayor Art Madrid, for Recommendations 06-70 through 06-76, and the La Mesa Police Department, signed by Chief of Police Alan Lanning, for Recommendations 06-70 through 06-74.

## Recommendations

**06-70: consider the significant benefits of joining the San Diego Regional Task Force. This includes outstanding Felony Warrant apprehension already established under the auspices of the San Diego Office of the United States Marshal.**

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The La Mesa Police Department currently faces significant staffing shortages that preclude us from assigning an officer to this task force on a full time basis. It is important to note that earlier this year detectives of the La Mesa Police Department were assigned temporarily to the United States Marshal's Office to assist in "Operation Falcon II", a warrant apprehension detail targeting sex offenders. The La Mesa Police Department will continue to assess and participate in future operations with the United States Marshal's Office, on a temporary basis, but at this time feel that the benefit of assigning an officer on a full time basis is not justified in balancing the benefit the officer would provide in regional warrant service duties versus enforcement and investigative activities within the City of La Mesa.

**06-71: that one officer from each law enforcement agency, be assigned full time to this task force.**

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable, as explained in the response to Recommendation 06-70.

**06-72: create a database to search all applications presented for any governmental assistance, benefit or privilege. This would include, but not be limited to, all applicants for driver's licenses, veteran's benefits, worker's compensation, unemployment benefits, professional licenses, all vehicle registrations, and other applicable sources.**

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The types of databases described typically do not fall under the control or jurisdiction of the City of La Mesa or local government in general. Data sharing agreements at both the federal and state level are required to make this recommendation feasible and, in all likelihood, would require enabling legislation, again at both the federal and state level. At the local level, in the City of La Mesa, warrant checks on applicants for any City license or permit are routinely conducted as part of our normal screening process.

**06-73: fund San Diego law enforcement agencies programs of "Wanted" billboards.**

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The use of billboards is a viable means of advertising ways in which the public can report information on crime, to either law enforcement agencies or private organizations, such as Crime Stoppers. It is impractical for maintaining information on wanted subjects, both from the perspective of timeliness and where the billboard information should be placed. The use of billboards can create a significant cost to local government as well. More timely and widespread information can be disseminated through cooperating TV and radio news organizations, internet sites, etc.

**06-74: install the E-Warrant computer program in Patrol Vehicles of all community Law Enforcement Agencies in San Diego County and San Diego City.**

This recommendation requires further analysis to determine both the costs and technological needs associated with implementation. This analysis will be completed no later than December 1, 2006. It is important to note that La Mesa police officers currently have indirect access to the E-Warrant system through the Police Department's Communications Center.

**06-75: sponsor legislation that will provide law enforcement agencies with additional tools to apprehend felons through integration of information from DMV, Social Security, Veterans pensions and other state and federal agencies.**

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The City of La Mesa does not have legal standing to sponsor legislation at the necessary state and

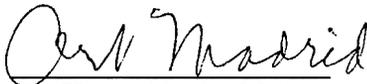
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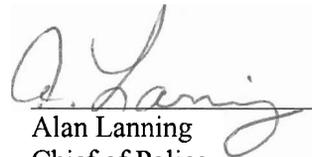
federal levels, to implement this recommendation. City officials will pursue discussions with state and federal legislators regarding this recommendation.

**06-76: give apprehension of outstanding Felony Warrant offenders a greater priority than currently appears to be the norm.**

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. We can appreciate the variety of testimony and information presented to the Grand Jury in its investigation of this issue. The law enforcement agencies identified in the report in all likelihood have varying internal procedures for the tracking and service of outstanding felony warrants which clearly affected the perception of the members of the Grand Jury in terms of what "...appears to be the norm." As for the La Mesa Police Department specifically, officers are provided with felony warrant information on a regular basis and routinely pursue leads to complete the service of felony warrants for subjects living in our community and for subjects wanted in connection with La Mesa cases. Officers participate in special warrant service operations, such as "Operation Falcon II", on a regular basis, and routinely check for outstanding warrants in the vast majority of enforcement contacts they make.

Yours truly,

  
The Honorable Art Madrid  
Mayor of La Mesa

  
Alan Lanning  
Chief of Police