

# 2014-2015 Ventura County Grand Jury



## Consolidated Final Report

The Ventura County Grand Jury is an independent investigative body with two major functions:

1. Civil Government Oversight - examination of all aspects of local government, including county, cities, special districts, and joint powers agreements to ensure that the best interests of county residents are being served.
2. Citizen Complaints - investigation of the validity of complaints brought by citizens alleging government misconduct, mistreatment, or inefficiencies.

**California Penal Code section 933 directs the Grand Jury to prepare and issue a final report. California Penal Code section 916 requires that all problems identified in the final report be accompanied by suggested means for resolution, including financial, where applicable.**

On the Cover

**Heritage Square - Oxnard**

*Photograph courtesy of Grand Juror Shirley Roberts*



Grand Jury  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009  
(805) 477-1600  
Fax: (805) 658-4523

[grandjury.countyofventura.org](http://grandjury.countyofventura.org)

July 1, 2015

The Honorable Donald D. Coleman  
Presiding Judge  
Superior Court, State of California  
County of Ventura

The Honorable Patricia Murphy  
Assistant Presiding Judge  
Superior Court, State of California  
County of Ventura

Dear Judge Coleman and Judge Murphy:

On behalf of the 2014-2105 Ventura County Grand Jury and in compliance with California Code Section 933(a), it is my pleasure to present the Consolidated Final Report to the Superior Court and to the residents of Ventura County. This report consists of 12 investigations that reflect a variety of issues within the County of Ventura and that we hope will inform, shape, and improve local government practices.

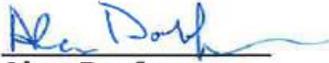
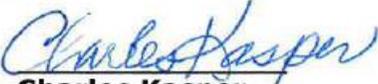
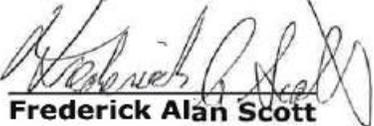
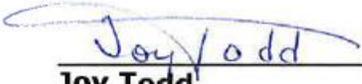
Each juror took an oath to “diligently investigate into all county matters of civil concern....” This oath was embraced without reservation by all 19 members and was displayed in the hundreds of hours spent in extensive analysis, interviews, impartial examination, and writing of the reports. The 2014-2015 Grand Jury brought varied backgrounds and experiences from all Ventura County supervisorial districts along with talent, intellect, and a focused work ethic.

We appreciate the cooperation of the officials and employees of the County, Cities, and Special Districts who were accessible, candid, and responsive to requests for information. A special thank you is well deserved for the support and counsel received throughout the year from Your Honors. We also wish to thank County Counsel Leroy Smith for his accessibility, legal advice, and good humor in all our dealings with him.

Members of the 2014-2015 Grand Jury gained a wealth of knowledge from their service to the community. We are all honored to have had this privilege, and I thank the Court for the opportunity to have served as Foreman.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Stewart  
Foreman  
2014-2015 Ventura County Grand Jury

 <b>Raymond Brown</b>	 <b>Ann Reeves</b>
 <b>Cecilia Coe</b>	 <b>Spencer Resnick</b>
 <b>Alan Dorfman</b>	 <b>Shirley Jean Roberts</b>
 <b>Janice Feingold</b>	 <b>Michael Sander</b>
 <b>Charles Kasper</b>	 <b>Frederick Alan Scott</b>
 <b>Charles Maslin</b>	 <b>Robert Stewart</b>
 <b>Braden McKinley</b>	 <b>Joan Stuart</b>
 <b>Thomas Middleton</b>	 <b>Sheila Taylor</b>
 <b>Jose Obregon</b>	 <b>Joy Todd</b>
	 <b>Steven Ira Weiss</b>



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July 1, 2015

To the Residents of Ventura County:

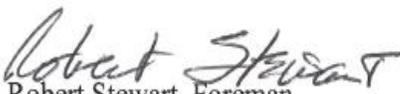
Each year the Superior Court of Ventura County invites citizens to apply for the Grand Jury. Applicants must be residents of the County for at least one year prior to selection, 18 years of age or older, of ordinary intelligence, with sufficient knowledge of the English language, and be of good character.

Members of the 2014-2015 Ventura County Grand Jury urge you to become actively involved in your community by applying for service as a Grand Juror. The Grand Jury reports reflect six initiated by public complaints, and six after agency briefings; monitoring Board of Supervisor meetings; reading newspapers and online reports; and observing local events. One report fulfills the mandate to inspect all detention facilities in the County.

The Grand Jury received 36 agency briefings from elected officials, County departments, and all ten cities. The Grand Jury completed 16 site visits in evaluating local government processes. You will find no better opportunity to understand your County of Ventura government.

Please consider serving a term on a future Grand Jury and help inform, shape, and improve your local communities through efficient, transparent government leadership.

Sincerely,

  
Robert Stewart, Foreman  
2014-2015 Ventura Grand Jury

Legal Requirements for Responses

**California Penal Code Section 933.05**

- (a) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:
  - (1) The respondent agrees with the finding.
  - (2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.
- (b) For the purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:
  - (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
  - (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
  - (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
  - (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.
- (c) However, if a finding or recommendation of a grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the board of supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the board of supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision making authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.
- (d) A grand jury may request a subject person or entity to come before the grand jury for the purpose of reading and discussing the findings of the grand jury report that relates to that person or entity in order to verify the accuracy of the findings prior to their release.
- (e) During an investigation, the grand jury shall meet with the subject of that investigation regarding the investigation, unless the court, either on its own determination or upon the request of the foreperson of the grand jury, determines that such a meeting would be detrimental.
- (f) A grand jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the grand jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after approval of the presiding judge. No officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the final report.



Donald D. Coleman  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
January 1, 2015 – Present



Brian J. Back  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2014



## 2014-2015 VENTURA COUNTY GRAND JURY

***Standing in the Back (L-R):*** Charles Maslin, Frederick Alan Scott, Ann Reeves, Janice Feingold, Alan Dorfman, Cecilia Coe, Sheila Taylor, Joan Stuart, Steven Ira Weiss, Jose Obregon, Thomas Middleton, Michael Sander

***Seated in the Front (L-R):*** Charles Kasper, Braden McKinley, Shirley Roberts, Robert Stewart (Foreman), Spencer Resnick, Raymond Brown, Joy Todd

## Ventura County 2014-2015 Grand Jury

<b>Raymond Brown</b> Recording Secretary	Fillmore	District 3
<b>Cecilia Coe</b>	Simi Valley	District 4
<b>Alan Dorfman</b>	Moorpark	District 4
<b>Janice Feingold</b>	Oxnard	District 5
<b>Charles Kasper</b> Sergeant-at-Arms	Ventura	District 1
<b>Charles Maslin</b>	Newbury Park	District 3
<b>Braden McKinley</b> Protocol Officer	Ventura	District 1
<b>Thomas Middleton</b>	Thousand Oaks	District 2
<b>Jose Obregon</b> Archivist/Librarian	Oxnard	District 5
<b>Ann Reeves</b>	Ojai	District 1
<b>Spencer Resnick</b> Treasurer	Thousand Oaks	District 2
<b>Shirley Jean Roberts</b> Foreperson Pro Tempore	Oxnard	District 5
<b>Michael Sander</b>	Thousand Oaks	District 2
<b>Frederick Alan Scott</b> Parliamentarian	Oak Park	District 2
<b>Robert Stewart</b> Foreperson	Oxnard	District 5
<b>Joan Stuart</b>	Ventura	District 1
<b>Sheila Taylor</b>	Oxnard	District 5
<b>Joy Todd</b> Correspondence Secretary	Camarillo	District 3
<b>Steven Ira Weiss</b> Technology Specialist	Simi Valley	District 4



**Supervisorial Districts in Ventura County**

## **List of Reports**

1. Elections and Polling Place Observations  
(Released March 5, 2015)
2. Ventura County Green Procurement Policy  
(Released March 25, 2015)
3. City of Oxnard and Its Adjoining Agricultural and Business Water Resources  
(Released April 1, 2015)
4. Port Hueneme Police Department Public Records Request Process  
(Released April 23, 2015)
5. County Responsibility for Sidewalks  
(Released June 1, 2015)
6. Countywide Bicycle Safety  
(Released June 1, 2015)
7. Detention Facilities and Related Law Enforcement Issues  
(Released June 1, 2015)
8. Panhandling and Charity Soliciting in the City of Thousand Oaks  
(Released June 2, 2015)
9. County Project Management – A Case Study  
(Released June 4, 2015)
10. Foster Care and Adoption Process in Ventura County  
(Released June 5, 2015)
11. Ventura County Electronic Health Record Implementation Risks  
(Released June 11, 2015)
12. Ventura County Hiring Processes  
(Released June 12, 2015)

These reports, and previous years' reports and responses, may be accessed on the Ventura County Grand Jury website: <http://www.ventura.org/grand-jury>.

## **GRAND JURY FUNCTIONS**

The “civil” Grand Jury is an investigative body created to serve as a voice of the people and a conscience of the community. Its mission is to determine if the best interests of the residents of Ventura County are being served. The Grand Jury reviews and evaluates policies, procedures, and practices of government to determine their efficiency and effectiveness. Jurors are not appointed by politicians but are volunteers who act as independent eyes and ears of the residents of Ventura County.

The Grand Jury oversees and investigates matters of civil concern within the boundaries of Ventura County, including the county itself, cities, tax-supported agencies and districts, and agencies or districts created by state law. The oversight function is accomplished through on-site or protocol visits, briefings, investigations, and research. The investigation function is accomplished through the operation of investigative committees (see below). Subjects for an investigation originate either from a public complaint or from a suggestion originating within the Grand Jury.

Based on the results of an investigation, the Grand Jury may prepare a formal report of facts, findings, and recommendations. Twelve of the 19 Grand Jurors must approve a report before it is released to the responsible agency and to the public. Sometimes the reports provide a basis for inquiry by other agencies. In all cases, the Grand Jury reports inform the public.

## **GRAND JURY STRUCTURE**

Following established guidelines, each Grand Jury determines its organizational structure for the year. The 2014-2015 Grand Jury consisted of five investigative committees, six internal support committees, and ten officer positions.

### **Investigative Committees**

- Audit, Finance, and County Administration
- Cities and Joint Powers
- County Services and Special Districts
- Health, Education, and Welfare
- Law, Justice, and Public Safety

### **Support Committees**

- Community Relations
- Complaint Review
- Editorial Review
- Executive
- Grand Jury Review
- Social

### **Officers**

- Archivist/Librarian
- Correspondence Secretary
- Foreperson
- Foreperson Pro Tempore
- Parliamentarian
- Protocol Officer
- Recording Secretary
- Sergeant-at-Arms
- Technology Specialist
- Treasurer

To ensure effective and efficient operations, Grand Jurors participated in at least two of each type of committee. Duties of the committees and officers are described below.

## **Investigative Committees**

Each year, the Grand Jury independently decides which governmental entities and issues to investigate. Once the Jury approves the opening of an investigation, it is assigned to one of the following investigative committees which oversees its progress and collaborates with lead investigators on producing the report.

### **Audit, Finance, and County Administration**

This committee investigates matters pertaining to sound administrative and financial policies, procedures, and practices as they apply to the County, cities, and other governmental entities. It may examine the accounts and records of these entities, and may employ independent audit firms if necessary.

### **Cities and Joint Powers**

This committee investigates the government offices and services of all cities located in Ventura County and the local entities operating under joint powers agreements.

### **County Services and Special Districts**

This committee investigates Ventura County government offices and services, as well as special districts that operate within the County.

### **Health, Education & Welfare**

This committee investigates all aspects of health care, education, and social services in Ventura County. Agencies investigated may include the Ventura County Health Care Agency, the Office of the Public Administrator/Public Guardian, Library Services Agency, Human Services Agency, Ventura County Animal Services, Ventura County Community College District, the County Superintendent of Schools, and all public school districts.

### **Law, Justice, and Public Safety**

This committee investigates and monitors the operational procedures of all County, municipal, and special district agencies involved in administering criminal justice, law enforcement, and public safety. As mandated by California Penal Code sections 919(a) and 919(b), it also investigates the condition and management of all adult and juvenile detention facilities in Ventura County.

## **Support Committees**

Support committees expedite the work of the Grand Jury. They are administrative in nature.

### **Community Relations**

This committee arranges for presentations to the public about the history, purpose, and operation of the Grand Jury. It prepares and distributes informative printed materials as well as Grand Jury membership application forms and complaint forms. The committee compiles and sends press releases to local media regarding Grand Jury events and published reports, and may provide assistance to the Editorial Review Committee and the Technology Specialist in updating the Grand Jury website. The committee may also coordinate participation of jurors in special community events.

### **Complaint Review**

This committee reviews complaints received from the public to ensure that they provide required and sufficient information to define an investigative inquiry and that the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of the Grand Jury. If a complaint appears to warrant an investigation, this committee refers it to the appropriate investigative committee.

### **Editorial Review**

This committee establishes guidelines for the basic structure and style of final reports and, on request, assigns a member as an editorial liaison for each open investigation. After approval of a report by the investigative committee, the Editorial Review Committee and the investigators jointly review the report to ensure clarity and conformance with the guidelines. This committee also drafts revisions to the Grand Jury Handbook and Handbook Supplement. It prepares the Consolidated Final Report with the assistance of the Technology Specialist.

### **Executive**

This committee includes all committee chairpersons, the Foreperson, the Foreperson Pro Tempore, and the Treasurer. It assists the Foreperson in planning and prioritizing administrative matters to be brought before the entire Grand Jury and assesses the direction and ongoing productivity of the Grand Jury and its committees. It may also serve as a forum for committee chairpersons to address issues and problems.

### **Grand Jury Review**

This committee coordinates with the Foreperson and Ventura County Superior Court Jury Services to maintain an accurate log of the Grand Jury's reports and the responses to those reports. It sends reminder letters to entities that have not provided required responses. When responses have been received and processed, the committee provides a set of copies to the Technology Specialist for posting on the Grand Jury's website.

**Social**

This committee is responsible for planning Grand Jury social functions and providing refreshments for those events. It shares responsibility with the Community Relations Committee for a spring open house for Grand Jury recruitment. The Social Committee Chair is responsible for collection, approval, and monthly submittal to the Treasurer of associated expense receipts.

**Officers**

All officers are elected by the members of the Grand Jury with the exception of the Foreperson, who is appointed by the Presiding Judge.

**Archivist/Librarian**

The Archivist/Librarian maintains an archive of the current and past Grand Jury final reports and responses and updates and assigns library space for materials accumulated by the various committees. The Archivist/Librarian also maintains and updates reference materials when received and organizes and maintains records and documents for the past five years.

**Correspondence Secretary**

The Correspondence Secretary opens all incoming mail, stamps each piece with the current date, records it in the incoming correspondence log, and distributes it appropriately. The Correspondence Secretary also maintains an outgoing correspondence file.

**Foreperson**

The Foreperson ensures that the Grand Jury and each of its committees operates effectively and efficiently in carrying out its responsibilities. The Foreperson serves as the official spokesperson for the Grand Jury. The Foreperson signs all written communications from the Grand Jury and approves all reports before submittal to County Counsel and the Presiding Judge. Additionally, the Foreperson: consults with the Presiding Judge, County Counsel, and District Attorney on legal issues raised by the Grand Jury and reports back to the Grand Jury; prepares the agenda and presides at meetings of the full Grand Jury; oversees election of Grand Jury officers and committee chairs; makes changes in committee assignments when necessary; serves as an ex-officio, voting member of all committees; monitors the progress of investigations; and ensures that jurors receive needed training.

**Foreperson Pro Tempore (Pro Tem)**

The Pro Tem assumes the Foreperson's responsibilities in the absence of, or at the request of, the Foreperson. The Pro Tem accepts assignments from and assists and advises the Foreperson as needed and serves as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

**Parliamentarian**

The Parliamentarian advises the Foreperson and committee chairpersons on matters of procedure to ensure that *Robert’s Rules of Order* are followed during discussions and voting.

**Protocol Officer**

The Protocol Officer coordinates site visits to various facilities and agencies as well as arranges for agency briefings held in the Grand Jury chambers. The Protocol Officer also coordinates activities with law enforcement, fire departments, and other agencies for such activities as “ride-alongs.”

**Recording Secretary**

The Recording Secretary takes minutes of Grand Jury general meetings, distributes copies of the minutes to all jurors, and maintains a file of all original signed minutes.

**Sergeant-at-Arms**

The Sergeant-at-Arms ensures that the Grand Jury chambers are secure at all times and that no unauthorized person is present. The Sergeant-at-Arms coordinates with County organizations on issues related to the Grand Jury chambers, makes recommendations concerning security matters, and serves as the Grand Jury Emergency Evacuation Coordinator.

**Technology Specialist**

The Technology Specialist identifies hardware and software needs and coordinates all service requests with the County’s Information Technology Department (IT). The Technology Specialist also arranges computer access for incoming jurors and termination of accounts for outgoing jurors; works with jurors to address computer questions or issues; works with the Editorial Review Committee to consolidate reports and other information into the Consolidated Final Report and arranges for its printing; and coordinates with IT to post the final reports and responses on the Grand Jury website.

**Treasurer**

The Treasurer administers the Grand Jury budget; reports to the Grand Jury on matters relating to the budget; collects, reviews and submits monthly expense claim forms after approval by the Foreperson; processes all Grand Jury bills; and handles other fiscal matters as needed. The Treasurer assumes the Foreperson’s responsibilities in the absence of both the Foreperson and the Foreperson Pro Tem.

## **Protocol Visits and Agency Briefings**

The purpose of protocol visits and agency briefings is to inform the Grand Jury about governmental functions of the County, cities, and special districts within the County so the jurors can meaningfully perform their statutory oversight functions. These visits and briefings acquaint the Jury with officials and managers of agencies they may examine and enable the jurors to better evaluate these agencies.

California Penal Code section 919(b) requires the Grand Jury to visit jails within the County to inspect their conditions and management. Accordingly, the 2014-2015 Grand Jury visited all jails in the County.

The 2014-2015 Grand Jury members visited 16 facilities, agencies, and departments within Ventura County and received 36 protocol visits/agency briefings. In addition, Grand Jury members participated in numerous “ride-alongs” with Sheriff’s and Fire Departments and inspectors from the Resource Management Agency.

### **Protocol Visits**

Advanced Water Purification Facility - Oxnard
Calleguas Municipal Water District
Casa Pacifica
Freeman Diversion Dam – United Water
Todd Road Jail
Ventura County Animal Services
Ventura County Department of Airports
Ventura County Elections Division of the Clerk-Recorder Office
Ventura County Fire District
Ventura County Hall of Administration
Ventura County Juvenile Justice Detention Facility
Ventura County Main Jail
Ventura County Medical Examiner
Ventura County Probation Agency Work-Furlough Housing
Ventura County Sheriff’s Crime Laboratory
Ventura Youth Correctional Facility

**Agency Briefings**

Board of Supervisors, Ventura County, District 1, Steve Bennett
Board of Supervisors, Ventura County, District 2, Linda Parks
Board of Supervisors, Ventura County, District 3, Kathy Long
Board of Supervisors, Ventura County, District 5, John Zaragoza
City Manager, City of Camarillo
City Manager, City of Fillmore
City Manager, City of Moorpark
City Manager, City of Ojai
City Manager, City of Oxnard
City Manager, City of Port Hueneme
City Manager, City of Santa Paula
City Manager, City of Simi Valley
City Manager, City of Thousand Oaks
City Manager, City of Ventura
Superior Court Executive Officer, State of California, County of Ventura
Ventura County Agriculture Commissioner
Ventura County Auditor-Controller
Ventura County Assessor
Ventura County Clerk and Recorder/Registrar of Voters
Ventura County Chief Information Officer
Ventura County Counsel
Ventura County Director of Public Health
Ventura County District Attorney
Ventura County District Attorney's Office – Identity Theft Division
Ventura County East Valley Jail
Ventura County Executive Officer
Ventura County Fire Chief
Ventura County General Service Agency
Ventura County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)
Ventura County Probation Department

Ventura County Public Health
Ventura County Public Works Agency
Ventura County Resource Management Agency
Ventura County Sheriff
Ventura County Transportation Commission
Ventura County Treasurer-Tax Collector

## Grand Jury Community Relations

The Community Relations Committee informs the public about the history, purpose, and operation of the Grand Jury by making presentations and distributing information to community organizations, colleges, city councils, and prospective jurors in the Jury Assembly Room. During the 2014-2015 Grand Jury term, Jury members made **presentations** at the locations shown below.

Organization	City
Santa Barbara Business College	Ventura
Los Amigos Toastmasters Club	Oxnard
Ventura Colleges of Law	Ventura
"Our Ventura TV" foreman interview show on CAPPs (public access TV)	Ventura
Friends & Family Open House	Ventura
Superior Court of California, County of Ventura, Jury Assembly Room	Ventura (weekly presentations, Oct. 22, 2014, through April 22, 2015)
Ventura County Women in Agriculture	Ventura
Leisure Village	Camarillo
Ventura County Professional Women's Network	Ventura
Camarillo Kiwanis Club	Camarillo
Nat'l Assoc. of Women in Construction	Oxnard
Simi Valley City Council	Simi Valley
Amer. Assoc. of University Women	Camarillo
Ventura Rotary Club	Ventura
Fillmore City Council	Fillmore
Port Hueneme City Council	Port Hueneme
Ventura City Council	Ventura
Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF)	Camarillo
Oxnard City Council (2 presentations)	Oxnard
Camarillo Rotary Club	Camarillo
Moorpark City Council	Moorpark
Ojai City Council	Ojai

<b>Organization</b>	<b>City</b>
Santa Paula City Council	Santa Paula
Grand Jury General Open House	Ventura
Newbury Park Management Advisory Council	Newbury Park
El Río Management Advisory Council	El Río (County unincorporated area)
Channel Islands Republican Women	Oxnard
Camarillo City Council	Camarillo

The Community Relations Committee also writes and distributes **media releases** that cover all significant events in the Grand Jury’s term, from publishing a report to holding an open house to encouraging people to apply for service. The following media outlets covered Grand Jury news during the 2014-2015 term.

<i>Ventura County Star</i>
<i>The Acorn</i>
California Grand Jury News (online)
<i>The Camarillo Acorn</i>
<i>The Fillmore Gazette</i>
<i>The Moorpark Acorn</i>
<i>The Simi Valley Acorn</i>
<i>The Thousand Oaks Acorn</i>
<i>Vida</i> (bilingual tabloid; release appeared in Spanish and English)
KCLU Radio
KTVA Radio
<i>Ventura Breeze</i>
Ventura.EdHat.com
Californiahealthline.org
healthcareitnews.com
KEYT local TV news