



# DIGEST

## *Around and About*

STEPS ARE under way to provide tighter anti-burglar security in County buildings, especially in three locations where blank County warrants are kept—the Hall of Administration, the Education building, 155 West Washington boulevard, and the Welfare building, Adams and Grand

The Board of Supervisors approved (Feb. 4) adding a third night guard at the Hall of Administration and equipping all three with walkie-talkie radios. Guards also will be stationed in the Education and Welfare buildings from 4 p.m. until midnight whenever the buildings are used for meetings or other evening purposes. Both buildings already are guarded from midnight to 8 a.m.

Sound detection alarm systems will be installed in the three structures to detect intruders.

CAO Lin Hollinger told the Board that thieves have mulcted merchants and others in the community of an estimated \$400,000 in the past year by cashing forged warrants stolen from the County. He said more than

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## BROAD MEDICAL CARE BEGINS

A SIGNIFICANT advance in providing medical care for County employees injured or stricken on their jobs got under way this week following Board of Supervisors' approval.

The Board accepted (Feb. 4) a plan recommended by the CAO and department of personnel under which a broad program of occupational health will be financed from part of the savings of a new system of self-insurance by the County for compensating and rehabilitating its disabled workers.

At present the County pays \$13 million a year in insurance premiums to the state compensation fund for this coverage. County officials estimate that a self-insurance system, whereby the County creates its own reserve funds for compensation, will save \$10 million during the next five years and \$1 million a year thereafter.

The switch to County self-insurance will go into effect next July 1 and will take over compensation for injuries occurring after that date.

CAO Lin Hollinger emphasized that the amount of compensation to disabled employees will not change under the self-insurance system ("these benefits are fixed by state law") but that the County hopes to provide much faster and more individualized care for disabled workers.

Development of the self-insurance system presently lies with the CAO's office but its administration will be

given to director of personnel Gordon Nesvig next July 1.

The occupational health program for employees began on a small scale last October when Dr. Jean Felton of the UCLA occupational health faculty joined Nesvig's department as director of occupational health. It will be expanded immediately and Dr. Felton's staff of 30 will be enlarged to 47.

These doctors and nurses will provide on-the-spot treatment at the Hall of Administration, B-50, for injured or sick employees who work in Civic Center. Later other treatment centers will be created at outlying locations, possibly including County hospitals.

The DIGEST invited Dr. Felton, and six executives from the CAO's staff and the department of personnel to a roundtable discussion of the new programs. Following are excerpts from the questions and answers:

*What will happen if an employee is taken sick or receives a minor injury on the job?*

"The employee should report at once to his supervisor. The supervisor will get in touch with us at the occupational health center in the Hall of Administration. We will see that he gets the treatment he needs, either here at our headquarters or at a hospital or at his doctor's office. If he needs transportation by car or ambulance, we'll see that he gets it. Once the hurt or ill employee re-

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## BROAD MEDICAL CARE

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## Around and About

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3,500 warrants were taken in 1968, most of them from the Welfare and Education buildings.

County guards' 23-hour training program at the sheriff's academy will be extended to 40 hours with more emphasis on techniques of surveillance and communication.

Most of the Hall of Administration's 61 outside doors hereafter will be chainlocked at night so they may not be opened from the inside. At present a person may leave by almost any entrance and block it open for later reentry. Employees working late shifts in the Hall of Administration will be notified which exits are available.

Hollinger said the mechanical department is restudying security requirements at other County buildings and will include plans for greater protection in its 1969-70 budget request.

LACEA'S ATTEMPT to invalidate the County's employee relations ordinance through a court suit apparently has come to the end of the road. The California supreme court has refused an immediate review of the case. Earlier, L. A. superior court ruled against the association, and the state court of appeal turned down LACEA's request for an injunction to freeze activities of the employee relations commission. Recent reports are that LACEA will drop the matter.

THE BOARD of Supervisors has voted authority to director of personnel Gordon Nesvig to prepare

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ports to his supervisor, the County will take care of him."

*How can an employee be sure he will get topnotch treatment and not just get shoved along a medical assembly line for a band-aid and aspirin?*

"We will provide the best. We will not stint on the level of consultants or specialists, the number of x-rays taken, the laboratory work or anything else. It has been proved that the more you do for the injured or ill employee right at the beginning, the cheaper it is for everybody in the long run, and the better it is for employee morale."

*If an employee must go to a hospital, will it generally be a County institution?*

"We will use County hospitals only when they have facilities that are not equaled anywhere else in this area. This generally will be true only in cases needing physical rehabilitation. For this we will utilize primarily Rancho Los Amigos hospital and, secondarily, the physical medicine service at County-USC medical center, because these are superlative services. Rancho is known internationally. It has visitors from all over the world."

*What about cases that are less serious but still need some rehabilitation treatment?*

"We're going to have a pretty fair-sized physical medicine facility for rehabilitation right here in the Hall of Administration — all the lamps, machines, diathermy, ultrasonic, massage, paraffin bath."

*How many County employees get injured on the job?*

"About 6,000 employees get hurt each year. A third of these, some 2,000, are injured enough to lose a day or more from their job."

*Where do most of the serious injuries occur?*

"The sheriff and fire departments and hospitals have the most serious accidents in terms of time lost. In

the intensive safety campaign we expect to launch we'll ask employees to suggest ways to eliminate hazards from their jobs. We're hiring two safety specialists to beef up this campaign."

*What if an employee's injury is such that even after rehabilitation he can not perform his old job?*

"Then we'll help him find another one that he can perform. And we'll arrange retraining if that is necessary."

*You mentioned more individual attention for injured or sick employees. How will you do that?*

"The key will be the employee service officer, a new function. In too many agencies and industries, people are left out to dry. They get injured and all of a sudden they have no contact with their supervisor, with their department, or with the County. Nobody calls on him. Maybe he gets some forms in the mail. The employee service officer is going to fill this gap. Whenever a County worker is confined at home or in the hospital, the ESO or the employee's supervisor will go see him, tell him what his benefits are, what the County can do for him, the amount of compensation he will receive, when the checks will arrive, what he can expect in medical care, how he will undergo medical and vocational rehabilitation, if that is necessary. And this will not be just a onetime conversation at the bedside, then goodbye. It will be a continuing service as long as the employee is unable to work."

*When will these employee service visits begin?*

"They will begin within a few weeks for the cases of greatest need. By July 1 every case of serious injury will be handled by an employee service officer."

*What if an employee is unhappy with the doctor who is treating him?*

"He may request a change. We will give him a list of five qualified doctors to choose from. That is pro-

vided by state law and it is in the statement of policy the Board of Supervisors adopted for this program."

*Who will determine where the injured or sick employee will be taken for treatment?*

"We will get him promptly to his own private physician if he has one. If his condition is such that he needs a specialist, we will tell him so and ask him, do you want us to call your private physician and leave the choice of a specialist up to him—or do you want us to recommend a specialist?"

*Suppose he decides to go to his private physician. Is that the end of it as far as the County is concerned?*

"Oh, no. We will keep in touch with the employee's physician, talk to him on the telephone to get authentic information on how the patient is getting along and what more, if anything, could be done for him."

*Will an employee get a bill for any treatment he is given at the occupational health center?*

"There will be no charge for treatment at the occupational health center. If he is an industrial injury case, he of course will get workman's compensation according to the benefit schedule that is part of state law."

*What about permanent disabilities? Any change in the way they will be handled?*

"No change. These cases will continue to be compensated under the County self-insurance program just as they have been under the state fund."

*Briefly, what are the disability payments for a County employee?*

"State law provides that the injured employee gets no compensation for the first seven days unless he is in a hospital. A County employee of course may use his sick leave during this period. After seven days the temporary disability payments of \$87.50 a week begin. Also at that time the County, under section 231 of the salary ordinance, begins paying the employee any

difference there may be between his disability pay of \$87.50 a week and his regular salary, so that he receives an amount equal to his salary for up to a year."

*How does the County expect to save so much money under self-insurance—\$10 million the first five years and a million dollars each year after that?*

"There are two major sources of savings. The County, instead of paying premium money to the state fund, will set up its own reserve to pay future claims. After five years this County reserve will exceed \$20 million. The County will invest these reserves and draw interest on them. Second, the state fund has many other operating expenses that the County now helps pay for. This expense will be eliminated under self-insurance. For example, the County will not have to pay the 2.85 percent state tax on premiums. This will save the County about \$370,000 a year."

## A Break for Travelers ✓

THE COUNTY treasury is going to be a little more generous to employees whose duties take them on out-of-town trips.

Beginning March 13 the meal allowance ceiling will rise from \$7 to \$10 a day. The basic limit for a hotel room is being raised from \$8 a night to \$12, and if the returning traveler can show a voucher from the hotel, the top allowance will be \$20 instead of the present \$15 a night.

The Board of Supervisors approved the increases Feb. 4 upon recommendation of the CAO's office, which reported the cost of meals and lodging has risen 40 percent since the County last set its allowance ceilings in 1956.

One item, an \$8 a day allowance for meals on trains, is being deleted—presumably because employees these days make business trips by train about as often as they do by stagecoach.

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guidelines for department heads in drawing up rules affecting employee relations—such things as use of County bulletin boards and meeting rooms by employee organizations, soliciting for members in offices, procedures for management-employee conferences. The Board directed Nesvig (Feb. 10) to confer with both employee representatives and department heads before issuing his guidelines.

EIGHT DIGNITARIES wielded trowels and gilt-painted shovels in groundbreaking ceremonies Feb. 7 for the huge Criminal Courts building on Temple street between Broadway and Spring. County treasurer Harold Ostly, chairman of the retirement board, said that the 19-story, \$33 million structure will be the largest of the 27 built for the County by the retirement board. Others present included Supervisors Kenneth Hahn and Ernest Debs, whose speech had to be delivered above the roar of Mayor Yorty's arriving and departing helicopter. Actual groundbreaking was done by a bulldozer, which began ripping up former parking lot 19 the minute the speeches ended. Construction of the building will take about three years.

ANOTHER CEREMONY: Supervisor Burton Chace will help dedicate the \$1.25 million structure on South Centre street in San Pedro that houses three municipal courts and other County branch operations. The facility actually has been in use for several weeks—the formalities are set for Feb. 28.

# Flood Descends on ERCOM

A DELUGE of 29 petitions to form representation units of County employees has flooded the employee relations commission (ERCOM) since Feb. 4. More are expected.

The bulk of petitions, 23 of them, have been filed by Los Angeles County Employees association.

California Association of Professional Employees has filed four petitions. California Nurses association and AFSCME council 49 one petition each. Council 49 previously had submitted five other petitions in January.

Each petition asks ERCOM to certify the petitioning organization to negotiate agreements with the County as to the pay and working conditions of employees within the proposed unit.

ERCOM began public hearings on the first batch of petitions Feb. 6 and was to continue hearings Feb. 13 and Feb. 20.

Four council 49 petitions are on the list for hearings: for a unit of 178 superior court clerks, a unit of 75 engineer department sewer employees, a unit of 26 locksmiths, and a unit of 1,700 deputy probation officers.

County Employees Union local 434 has three proposed units scheduled for hearings: one for 196 x-ray technicians, another for 71 hospital pharmacists, a third for more than 8,000 hospital attendants, custodians, guards, vocational nurses, food workers and others in nine County departments.

Los Angeles County Employees association (LACEA) has petitioned to represent the following units:

- 556 truck drivers and other transportation workers in 23 County departments. Council 49 later filed as an "intervenor" on this petition, meaning it wishes to compete on the ballot with LACEA if the commission orders an election among employees to choose the organization to represent them.

- 277 power equipment repairmen, locksmiths and other equipment maintenance employees in seven departments. Council 49 filed as an intervenor and also has filed an overlapping petition covering 561 employees.

- 636 laborers in flood control, road and engineering departments.

- 374 equipment maintenance, construction and repair laborers and instrument makers in 17 departments. Council 49 has intervened.

- 212 court clerks. Council 49 earlier filed an overlapping petition for most of the same employees.

- 414 storekeeping and purchasing employees in 29 departments.

- 274 stationary engineers, dam operators, linemen and other utility men in mechanical, flood control, hospitals, engineering and communication departments.

- 1,455 crafts employees in 12 departments. The building trades council earlier filed an overlapping petition.

- 152 investigators for the district attorney and public defender.

- 1,817 deputy probation officers and probation transportation deputies. This overlaps an earlier council 49 petition.

- 254 supervising probation officers.

- 133 hospital ambulance drivers.

- 262 sheriff's corrections officers.

- 276 security guards in eight departments.

- 84 agricultural inspectors and others in hospitals, agriculture and sheriff departments.

- 1,814 stenographers in all County departments.

- 186 cashiers in ten departments.

- 388 telephone operators in nine departments.

- 163 library aids and assistants in nine departments.

- 160 librarians in eight departments.

- 964 culinary workers in hospitals, probation, sheriff and fire departments.

- 1,270 firemen. Firefighters local 1014 earlier filed an overlapping petition.

- 290 therapists in hospitals, DPSS and sheriff departments.

California Association of Professional Employees (CAPE) has petitioned to represent the following four groups:

- 1,205 technical employees in 11 departments.

- 431 supervising technical employees in 15 departments.

- 616 architectural, civil, electrical, mechanical and structural engineers.

- 674 supervisors of engineers.

LACEA intervened in all four CAPE petitions.

California Nurses association petitioned to form a unit of the 1,770 nurses in hospitals, health, sheriff, probation and mental health departments. LACEA intervened.

Council 49 petitioned to represent 805 carpenters, painters, plumbers and tree trimmers in the park-recreation department.

County of Los Angeles

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