



DIGEST

Around and About

ACTING CAO Harry Hufford, upon orders of the Board of Supervisors, is setting up a special investigation unit in his office. Its job: to receive and investigate complaints of possible unethical or criminal behavior within County government. The unit will start with a staff of four investigators and a secretary, with authority to borrow help as needed from other County departments.

PLANS WILL be drawn soon to redo the former sanitation district headquarters on Beverly boulevard into a sheriff's crime lab. Estimated cost: \$796,000. It will be in place of a \$2.9 million lab planned as part of a proposed sheriff's headquarters building, and will enable the lab to be moved from its present decrepit quarters at 501 North Main street.

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BIDS SOUGHT FOR DENTAL PLAN

THE MACHINERY to create a free dental-care plan for the 65,000 full-time permanent County employees began to turn last Tuesday (Dec. 17) when the Board of Supervisors authorized the department of personnel to seek bids from 16 insurance firms believed capable of handling such a plan.

The firms will be asked to specify what kind of dental care they could provide for the \$7 a month per employee the County will pay, starting next June 1. Annual cost to the County will be nearly \$5.5 million.

The dental plan was agreed on last spring in County negotiations

with a joint council of employee organizations.

The plan will not cover employees' dependents.

The County proposes an indemnity-type dental plan (similar to Blue Cross for medical care) in which the employee chooses his own dentist, then applies to the plan for reimbursement.

Director of personnel Gordon Nesvig said he and the employees' joint council will review the 16 companies' bids and proposed coverages in late January or February. After these discussions, Nesvig will recommend to the Board of Supervisors a specific plan to begin next June 1.

January Is Sick Leave Sell-back Time

FULLTIME EMPLOYEES who used no sick leave during 1974 will have an opportunity next month to "sell back" one day of unused sick leave to the County.

The cash reimbursement is included, for the first time, in the package of employee benefits the Board of Supervisors adopted in the 1974-75 salary ordinance last June.

The employee has the option of accumulating all his sick leave for future use, or of applying for one day's reimbursement at the pay rate he is receiving on Dec. 31, 1974.

Director of personnel Gordon Nesvig and auditor-controller Mark Bloodgood have sent all department heads a memo outlining the reimbursement procedure.

The memo says that, to be eligible, an employee

—Must have worked continuously as a permanent, fulltime County

employee during 1974

—Must have used no sick leave, including personal leave, during 1974

—Must notify his department he wants the one-day reimbursement by filing a signed certificate form by Jan. 31, 1975. Nesvig said each department will make these special forms available to their employees as soon as possible.

Bloodgood said payment in most cases can be expected no later than March 1.

Evening Classes

CIVIC CENTER evening classes for spring semester will begin Feb. 3. A special issue of THE DIGEST describing the classes and telling how to register will appear the first week in January.

Direct Deposit Being Planned

ACTING CAO Harry Hufford said this week "direct deposit" of employees' paychecks is being considered as part of a new payroll system the County is developing.

Under direct deposit, an employee who applied to enter the system

Edelman Endorses Charter Changes

NEWLY ELECTED third district Supervisor Edmund Edelman began his four-year term (Dec. 2) with a call to amend the County charter to enlarge the Board of Supervisors and to create a stronger chief executive.

He also made County history by appointing Alma Fitch, 46, the first woman Supervisor's chief deputy. An Edelman aide for five years, Mrs. Fitch headed his councilmanic staff at L.A. City Hall.

Edelman told a news conference before his swearing-in:

"I think the number one priority is to expand the number of Supervisors to seven. And I think the Supervisors should be taken out of the day-to-day running of County government to a large degree, and place that in the hands of a chief executive, either elected or appointed."

Edelman said he hopes to see such reforms submitted to the voters by the June 1976 election, either through action of the Board or through initiative petitions from the people.

The 44-year-old Edelman had been a city councilman since 1965. Holder of a B.A. in political science and a law degree from UCLA, he served as a staff attorney to the legislature in Sacramento, and to a House subcommittee and the national labor relations board in Washington, D.C.

Edelman, a tennis buff, lives in West Los Angeles with his wife Mari and daughters, aged four and two.

would not receive a paper warrant. Instead the County, through computer tapes, would deposit the proper amount to the employee's personal account in a bank of his choice, thus saving him the need to go through the deposit procedure. The County would send him a paycheck stub showing the amount of deposit and amounts deducted, as on present paycheck stubs.

Hufford informed the Board of Supervisors that the system would be voluntary. Any employee who preferred could continue to receive a paper warrant.

Hufford said the personnel department recently mailed questionnaires to 800 County employees selected at random, asking if they would be interested in using direct deposits. Of the 800 sampled, 525 replied; 253 of them (48 percent) said they were interested.

"We anticipate that after some personal experience with direct deposit, employees would find it beneficial and would spread the word, thereby increasing the number of employees taking part," Hufford said.

He said the feasibility of direct deposits is being studied jointly by the departments of treasurer-tax collector, auditor-controller, data processing, personnel, and the CAO.

Hufford estimated the system would begin late in 1975.

Nathanson Renamed

THE BOARD of Supervisors has reappointed Ben Nathanson to another three-year term on the employee relations commission. The term expires Oct. 8, 1977.

Nathanson first joined the three-man commission in 1970 and has been chairman since July 1971.

CSC Interviews Coming

THE BOARD of Supervisors indicated last Tuesday (Dec. 17) that it intends to conduct interviews soon with persons nominated by Board members to fill the civil service commission seat formerly held by O. Richard Capen.

SS Tax Ceiling Rises

FEDERAL SOCIAL security taxes will continue their upward climb in 1975 for County employees earning more than \$13,200 a year.

Auditor-controller Mark Bloodgood said the 5.85 percent tax will apply to the first \$14,100 earned instead of the first \$13,200, as has been the case this year.

The result will be a rise in the maximum tax from this year's \$772.20 to a new total of \$824.85. In 1973 the maximum was \$631.80.

Federal laws provide for automatic increases in the tax as social security benefits rise. Earlier this year Congress approved an 11 percent boost in benefits.

In addition to employees' contributions, the federal treasury receives a like amount from the County as an employer.

Ag Chief Lichty Retires

RALPH LICHTY, 57, County agricultural commissioner since 1965, retired yesterday (Dec. 19). The Board of Supervisors voted him a scroll honoring his 35 years of County service.

Others retiring:

With more than 35 years service—Olga Bauer, probation, and Juanita Nichols, adoptions.

With 30 to 35 years service—Varden Boergadine and James Cox, fire department; Dwight Crum, beaches; Keith Harding, sheriff; J. O. Barbee, mechanical; Lois Chapman and Rose Kodimer, health services; and Clifford Smith, parks.

County of Los Angeles

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