



DIGEST

Around and About

AUCTIONING BEGINS tomorrow (Oct. 9) of County sedans formerly driven home-to-work by County executives. The Board of Supervisors ordered 500 of the vehicles turned in as an economy move. More than 100 have been surrendered, the remainder will be turned in by Dec. 1. Of the 500 total, 220 will become County pool cars; the other 280 will be auctioned off at the rate of 30 tomorrow and 30 on the second Saturday of each month until they are gone. Sales begin at 10 a.m. at mechanical department CD building, 1104 North Eastern avenue. Bidders may view the cars from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. the Wednesday before each sale.

COUNTY BLOOD bank coordinator Carol Grisby announced the next Civic Center bloodmobile will be held Nov. 17 and 18 in an attempt to check a rising deficiency in the County's account with the Red Cross blood bank. Donors may go to room B-85, Hall of Administration, between 8:50 a.m. and 1:50 p.m.

THE SHERIFF's academy has graduated 72 more men and 5 more women as reserve officers, adding to the corps that began in 1940. The reservists took 300 hours training in police science, weapons, and physical fitness. They will back up regular officers in the sheriff's and County parks department and seven cities.

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Cuts in Budget Force Re-thinking

COUNTY DEPARTMENT heads and aides were poring over their budgets this week, seeking ways to absorb fresh cuts and still minimize layoffs of employees.

The cuts, coming as the Board of Supervisors (Sept. 15) adopted a revised 1976-77 budget \$51 million smaller than the \$3.3 billion June budget, underscored what Board members described as a historic change of direction for County government, an end to the constant growth in work force and budgets that has occurred over the past generation.

Said Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, after the Board unanimously adopted the revised budget:

"We are marking a new trend in County government—to go downhill rather than uphill. Ever since World War II we have increased every department. In 1952 we had 13,000 employees, now 83,000, and in that time the budget went from \$350 million to more than \$3 billion. Now, starting with this action, we are going to see a decline in new employees, new programs, new spending."

The Board, in an unprecedented action made possible by a new state law, reopened the 1976-77 budget Aug. 30 and 16 days later adopted a leaner version that will mean new cuts for every County department.

In brief, the Board

—Slashed the budget of ten departments by specific dollar amounts, totaling almost \$5.9 million. These general fund cuts included DPSS, \$3.9 million; sheriff, \$950,000; probation, \$500,000; superior court, \$124,500; consumer

affairs, \$91,000 (11 of its 31 positions); purchasing and stores, \$78,000; regional planning, \$75,000; public administrator, \$75,000; public defender, \$61,250; and County clerk, \$33,400

—Ordered cuts of 2½ percent in the budgets of all other departments having 100 or more employees (excluding health services)* and cuts of 1½ percent in smaller departments. These reductions totaled \$5.7 million

—Decreased capital projects spending by \$2.6 million, an action that will cause 51 layoffs in the facilities department's architectural engineering and project management divisions effective Nov. 1

—Eliminated \$1.9 million for replacing equipment in most departments

—Notified Otis Art Institute that its \$477,000 annual County support will be phased out, ending in June 1978

—Lowered the delinquent tax reserve from 2.5 percent of the total tax levy to 2 percent, knocking \$5.8 million from the budget

—Reduced County contributions to community groups by \$2.1 million, leaving \$2.8 million

—Cut County subsidies to RTD by \$1.6 million and to several cultural and business groups by \$121,000.

The budget adopted Sept. 15 calls for a general fund tax rate of \$4.46 per \$100 of assessed valuation, a drop of six cents from last year's rate.

*The district attorney's cut was set at 2 percent.

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BUDGET CUTS

(Continued from page 1)

The Board of Supervisors retained in the budget a \$5 million "anti-layoff" reserve to be used where temporary funding may avert, or at least postpone, layoffs of permanent employees.

Despite the reserve, scattered layoffs have begun in some departments.

Health services is dismissing more than 250 temporary employees—craftsmen, clerical and dietary workers—starting today (Oct. 8) and continuing next week. The department, under its hiring freeze, already had phased out 1,150 positions from March through July.

Mechanical department released five employees (Sept. 24), four more may go during October.

Superior court has laid off six conciliation counselors.

CAO/director of personnel Harry Hufford wrote to all department heads (Sept. 15) asking them to "make every effort to minimize the need for personnel layoffs. Such efforts should include reduction, re-assignment or transfer of personnel within your department or to other County departments. . . The department of personnel will work closely with you and with affected employees to place them, if possible, in other vacant positions within the County for which they qualify and

Board Seats Open

NOMINATIONS WILL remain open until 5 p.m. next Friday (Oct. 15) for the "third member" seat on both the board of retirement and board of investments.

Nomination forms may be obtained from registrar-recorder Leonard Panish's office, 808 North Spring Street, room 100. Nomination requires 100 signatures from general members of the retirement system, no more than 20 from any one department.

Mail-in ballots will be distributed among general members starting Nov. 22.

are willing to accept, in lieu of their being laid off."

Guidelines for handling workforce reductions have been sent to each department's personnel officer.

3-Year Reduction

The Board of Supervisors (Sept. 21) made clear its intention to continue shrinking the County staff. The Board unanimously directed Hufford and department heads to develop plans to reduce the workforce by 6,000 fulltime, permanent employees over the next three years. The motion assumes no major changes from the status quo, such as a federal takeover of welfare, national health insurance, or other sweeping mandates from the U. S. or state governments.

Supervisor James Hayes, supporting the motion, said: "The public has been shocked by the growth of government—local, state, and federal—over the past ten years. We have to do something to stop this astronomical growth as it has occurred in the past."

Hufford said the Board order decreasing staff will mean a reduction in all County services. But he said attrition should prevent heavy layoffs.

Future Benefits Studied

THE BOARD of Supervisors, during its September budget-revising session, ordered a CAO study of whether, as an economy measure, some County retirement benefits should be changed for future employees.

County counsel John Larson and treasurer H. B. Alvord pointed out that any changes could apply only to employees hired after a specified future date and not to present County employees.

Case law in California has established that retirement benefits are part of an employee's "contract of employment" and may not be diminished without providing him comparable new benefits.

Suggested changes would include reducing the maximum yearly cost-of-living increase in pensions from 3 percent to 2 percent, increasing employee contribution rates to former levels, and other revisions.

8 Long Weekends Coming in 1977

AN ALMOST solid array of three-day weekends appears on the County's holiday schedule for 1977—eight of them—but this cheery prospect is offset somewhat by the fact that both New Year's day and Lincoln's birthday fall on Saturdays and so under state law will not be days off for County workers.

The 1977 lineup:

Washington's birthday, Monday, Feb. 21

Memorial day, Monday, May 30

Independence day, Monday, July

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Labor day, Monday, Sept. 5

Admission day, Friday, Sept. 9

Columbus day, Monday, Oct. 10

Veterans day, Friday, Nov. 11

Thanksgiving, Thursday, Nov. 24

Christmas, Monday, Dec. 26

County holidays are designated by sections 6700 and 6701 of the state Government Code, which provide that whenever a holiday falls on a Sunday, as does Christmas in 1977, the following Monday will be observed as the holiday.

The code also says that if a holiday falls on Saturday, it shall not be treated as a holiday, with one exception—Veterans day—which will be a holiday on the preceding Friday. This will be the case when Veterans day comes on Saturday in 1978.

Remaining holidays in 1976 are Columbus day next Monday (Oct. 11) and two that fall on Thursday—Veterans day Nov. 11 and Thanksgiving Nov. 25.

County of Los Angeles

DIGEST

EDITORIAL BOARD

HARRY HUFFORD, Chief Administrative Officer/Director of Personnel

FRANK ZOLIN, President
County Management Council

LORIN PETERSON, Editor

Editorial Office: Room 526, Hall of Administration, 222 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 90012
Telephone 974-2490