



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

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MEDIA RELEASE

CONTACT: E.G. PRIETO, SHERIFF ~ CORONER

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF INTERNAL SURVEY

DATE: DECEMBER 10, 2014

SHERIFF RELEASES EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS AND PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE FOR THE YOLO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

We have reviewed all available information to make informed decisions on how to enhance the Sheriff's Office as a whole. We understand that we must constantly strive for improvement in everything we do. Sheriff Ed Prieto said, "We will continue to focus, as we have in the past, on the importance of proving our motto of "Service Without Limitations" and I remain proud of our department and the overall tone of the internal confidential survey. I would like to thank the evaluators and members of our department for their focus on constructive choices that will ultimately enhance our department and provide better service to the community."

Our employees are our most important resource. Good people came together to discuss possible ways to improve our operations and we are listening. Whether it is through a survey or engaging our chain of command, the Sheriff has confidence that our communication streams will help us grow as a department. Along with being proud of the people who represent the department, the Sheriff continually strives to gain input, recommendations and ideas on how to improve every aspect of the Yolo County Sheriff's Office.

In June of this year the Yolo County Grand Jury released a special report criticizing the Yolo County Sheriff's Office. In response to the Grand Jury's opinions, Sheriff Prieto initiated an independent working group to survey members of the department to get direct input and suggestions to improve the department. The survey was not based on political expediency or favor, but in the hopes to continually better our operations and service to our community. The Sheriff's Office and its management staff allowed the

"Service Without Limitations"

work group discretion to conduct this analysis independently and without attempts to influence or direct the outcome of the inquiry.

The task force was chaired by former Woodland Mayor, Marlin "Skip" Davies, who met with representatives from all bargaining unions within the department to devise a survey that would accurately assess the climate of the department and to make suggestions on how operations could be improved. The survey was transmitted electronically to all 265 Sheriff's Office employees on August 14. Consistent with representations to department employees, the survey responses were kept anonymous. The survey closed on August 27 and 166 department employees voluntarily participated in all or part of the survey.

During the survey, employees were asked to respond to some questions with answers of yes, no, or undecided, while some questions were multiple choice and employees could select as many answers as they felt were applicable to their opinions of the department and its operations. There were 18 questions that allowed respondents to respond in narrative form. The identities of those who responded in narrative form or those who requested to further elaborate on their opinions to the evaluators personally were not revealed to the Department, to encourage free flow of information.

Sheriff Prieto commented, "The results of the survey revealed that in most categories, the department's management team are meeting or exceeding standards the public and department employees would expect from a progressive law enforcement agency. The survey also pointed to some areas in which the operations and management of the department could improve."

An average of 70% of the employees who responded were of the opinion that the Sheriff and his command staff are approachable. Over 80% of the respondents believed their supervisor trusted them, supported their work, made themselves available to their employees and created an atmosphere where employees felt comfortable talking about work-related issues.

Employees also revealed that they believed the work they do makes a difference in Yolo County. The department also received high marks in the areas of providing adequate job training and clear standards of behavior that reflects best law enforcement practices.

Of the 105 employees who responded to the question about whether or not they are thinking of leaving the department, 62 stated reasons not able to be controlled by the Sheriff's Office such as work location, pay and benefits, career change or retirement. 27 responded that if they left, it would be due to their perceived challenges and culture of the department. 16 responded "Other", but that data was not provided to the Department.

In addition to the positive perceptions of Department operations, employees were very candid regarding areas on which the Department could make improvements. One significant area employees believed improvement should be made is in the area of information flow and communication. After reviewing the survey results, the Sheriff has

implemented change. The Department has initiated a monthly newsletter which will be distributed to every Department member. Management staff has enhanced efforts to regularly visit all sections within the department and will continue to attend briefings and meetings to exchange information directly with employees and seek their input.

The survey also revealed that a perception exists that department standards are not applied in a consistent manner among all employees. Being that personnel matters are, by law, confidential, they are not discussed openly among employees outside of an investigation. The Department is bound to enforce progressive discipline, so employees may be disciplined differently depending on the severity of the offense and the discipline history of the employee. Management and Supervisors are reaffirming these requirements with employees at regular meetings.

Employees also stated that our personnel evaluation system is not always fair and consistent. Along with the Peace Officer Standards and Training's mandated Supervisory training, the Sheriff has directed that all Department supervisors and managers participate in personnel evaluation update training which is in the finishing stages of being completed. The theme of this training consists of clarifying rating standards, defining rating categories, clarification of job standards and expectations and fairly documenting employee performance while giving recognition to an employee's work. This training will also re-establish the goal of guiding employees toward achieving their full potential and providing enhanced service to the community.

Law enforcement executives from within Yolo County gave the Sheriff high marks in his professional demeanor. Sheriff Prieto has been in positions of law enforcement supervision/management for over 30 years. The Sheriff has become comfortable enough with his employees, regardless of rank, to communicate with them in an informal manner. Within the department, the Sheriff knows that his large stature can be intimidating to some, so this style of informal communication strives to put employees at ease. The Sheriff has realized the perception of his informal approach and is now addressing employees by name, rank or title.

Although, the task force report stated that 63 of 133 believed the Sheriff or his representatives would retaliate against them if they were to report a sensitive issue, the same survey reported that 94 of 126 respondents to a similar question stated they have never been retaliated against by the Sheriff or his representatives. The Sheriff and management staff have a zero-tolerance policy for retaliation, which he consistently discusses with Department supervisors and managers.

In order to remain progressive and innovative, three months ago, the Department set up a full time unit to review and completely revise our Department's General Orders manual in order to ensure continual compliance with the latest laws, case decisions and proper, modern law enforcement practices. When completed, every paid and volunteer member of our department will receive a written updated copy.

The Sheriff has directed Undersheriff Tom Lopez to form an internal task force, consisting of representatives from every employee bargaining unit from within the Sheriff's Office, to focus on making improvements in the areas addressed in the survey and develop a plan to continue this forum into the future.

Attached, please find a copy of the actual survey taken by department employees. Listed on the survey are the actual numerical values for each response. Of the 265 department employees, 166 answered the survey. On an average 135 employees answered any given question.

INDEPENDENT WORK GROUP ASSESSMENT - Yolo County Sheriff's

About this survey...

The Special Task Force to review the 2014 Grand Jury findings concerning the Sheriff's Office and related matters is requesting your help in gaining a better understanding of staff morale, satisfaction, and engagement in the Sheriff's Department. Your confidential, anonymous opinions are vital to supporting the Department's future and this survey is your chance to express those opinions and shape the direction.

All responses will remain strictly anonymous and managed off-site by Municipal Resource Group. We are requesting confidential demographic information to help identify themes and commonalities within workgroups. We have no desire and will not be able to trace individual responses. The Community, Board, CAO and Department staff - including management - will see blended survey results only as aggregate and anonymous data.

Participation in this survey is optional. We hope for 100% participation in order to ensure everyone's voice is heard. When you receive this survey, please give it your prompt attention. You may skip any question you wish and, as shown below, may opt out of the survey.

Thank you for your time and honesty. If you have any questions about the survey and/or process, please feel free to contact me directly. PLEASE RESPOND TO THE SURVEY BY MONDAY AUGUST 25, 2014.

Skip Davies, Task Force Chairperson

1. I will participate in this assessment: 174 Answered

☐ Yes 166

☐ No 8

2. If you choose not to participate, please tell us why you will not participate: 4 Answered

INDEPENDENT WORK GROUP ASSESSMENT - Yolo County Sheriff's

3. I work in the following area: 146 Answered

- ☐ Patrol and Investigations 26
- ☐ Detention 61
- ☐ Animal Services 12
- ☐ Courts 16
- ☐ Administrative (Finance, Coroner, Civil and Planning & Research) 11
- ☐ Prefer not to answer 20

4. I have worked for Yolo County for: 141 Answered

- ☐ 0-5 years 37
- ☐ 6-10 years 46
- ☐ 11-15 years 25
- ☐ 16-20 years 20
- ☐ 20+ years 13

5. I have no foreseeable plans to voluntarily leave my employment at Yolo County: 144 Answered

- ☐ True 103
- ☐ False 41

6. If you answered "false" to the previous question, please indicate the reason(s) that you may leave Yolo County (you may select more than one reason), 144 Answered

- ☐ Challenges with culture or climate of Department 27
- ☐ Better career growth opportunities 23
- ☐ Retirement 9
- ☐ Salary and benefits 16
- ☐ Flexible work schedule 4
- ☐ Desire career change 6
- ☐ Commute or work location 4
- ☐ Other (please specify) 16

7. What would you consider your greatest workplace challenges or difficulties? 109

Answered

INDEPENDENT WORK GROUP ASSESSMENT - Yolo County Sheriff's

8. What would you consider to be the most desirable aspects of your work? 103 Answered

9. What concerns do you have about the workplace? (you may select more than one)

38 Answered

- ☐ Poor morale 67
- ☐ Fear of reprisal 74
- ☐ Supervision challenges 48
- ☐ Failure to modernize operations 38
- ☐ Lack of management oversight 30
- ☐ Compensation and benefit issues 39
- ☐ Lack of training and development 51
- ☐ Application of policies and practices 43
- ☐ Technology limitations 22
- ☐ Reputation 28
- ☐ Stressful work environment 59
- ☐ Other (please specify) 40

SUPERVISOR / STAFF COMMUNICATION

10. To what degree does your direct supervisor show trust in you? 146 Answered

- None 6 Not sure 23 Some 23 A significant amount 46 A great deal 48
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

11. To what degree does higher-level management (Lieutenant and above) show trust in staff? 143 Answered

- (None 19 Not sure 47 Some 28 A significant amount 36 A great deal 13
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

12. Are you comfortable talking with your direct supervisor about work issues? 145 Answered

- Not at all 10 Not very much 14 Somewhat 37 Quite 36 Very 48
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13. Are you comfortable talking with higher-level management (Lieutenants and above) about work issues? 142 Answered

- Not at all 34 Not very much 34 Somewhat 31 Quite 18 Very 25
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

INDEPENDENT WORK GROUP ASSESSMENT - Yolo County Sheriff's

14. Does the Department seek employee input? 144 Answered

Not sure 19 Seldom 79 Sometimes 27 Often 13 Frequently 6

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. Does the Department respond to your ideas? 142

Not sure 35 Seldom 61 Sometimes 26 Often 15 Frequently 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

16. Do you trust your direct supervisor to support your work? 145 Answered

Not sure 6 Not at all 16 Somewhat 43 Substantially 80 Completely

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

17. Do you believe your Supervisor trusts you? 144 Answered

☐ Yes 95

☐ No 19

☐ I don't know 31

18. Comments about working relationships: 59 Answered

WORK EXPECTATIONS

19. My work expectations are clear: 142 Answered

No opinion/don't know Strongly disagree Disagree 25 Agree 109 Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

20. I have access to my direct supervisor as needed: 142 Answered

No opinion/don't know Strongly disagree Disagree 2 Agree 137 Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

21. My supervisor gives me clear and helpful spoken or written feedback about my work:

134 Answered

Daily 7 Weekly 20 Monthly 36 Quarterly 8 Annually 35 Less than annually 28

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

22. My supervisor communicates with me in a professional and respectful manner:

142 Answered

No opinion/don't know Strongly disagree Disagree 17 Agree 118 Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

23. When co-workers are not getting along, my supervisor addresses the issue: 142 Answered

No opinion/don't know 30 Strongly disagree 0 Disagree 0 Agree 65 Strongly agree 47

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

INDEPENDENT WORK GROUP ASSESSMENT - Yolo County Sheriff's

24. Our Department has clear, written standards of behavior that reflect best practices in law enforcement. 141 Answered

No opinion/don't know 23 Strongly disagree 0 Disagree 33 Agree 85 Strongly agree 0

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

25. Our Department has clear, written General Orders. 140 Answered

☐ Yes 100
☐ No 32
☐ I don't know 9

26. Are standards of behavior applied consistently? 138 Answered

☐ Yes 40
☐ No 98

COMMUNICATION AND RECOGNITION

27. How well is information disseminated within the Department? 141 Answered

☐ Information flow works well 34
☐ Information flow is lacking 78
☐ Information flow is nonexistent 14
☐ I am not sure 15

28. What is the impact of communication challenges? 76 Answered

29. I feel recognized for my work contributions: 138 Answered

☐ Yes 67
☐ No 71

INDEPENDENT WORK GROUP ASSESSMENT - Yolo County Sheriff's

30. If you disagreed with the previous question, what would make you feel recognized for your work contributions (you may select more than one) 71 Answered

- ☐ More detailed employee recognition program 28
- ☐ Constructive feedback from supervisor 30
- ☐ Praise from supervisor or command staff 39
- ☐ Professional development/training opportunities 30
- ☐ Performance goals 11
- ☐ Other (please specify) 24

31. How should the current Employee Recognition Program be modified? 68

32. My work makes a difference in Yolo County: 140 Answered

- No opinion/don't know 19 Strongly disagree Disagree 24 Agree 97 Strongly agree
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

33. I receive a written performance evaluation at least once per year: 140 Answered

- No opinion/don't know 11 Strongly disagree 0 Disagree 41 Agree 88 Strongly agree 0
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

34. These performance evaluations are helpful in addressing areas of needed improvement. 133 Answered

- Not helpful 25 Somewhat helpful 27 Don't know Frequently helpful 61 Consistently helpful
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

35. I believe my previous performance evaluations (goals, areas of improvement and strengths, etc.) are used as a tool or base of reference in subsequent evaluations?

- 136 Answered
- ☐ Yes 54
 - ☐ No 30
 - ☐ I don't know 52

INDEPENDENT WORK GROUP ASSESSMENT - Yolo County Sheriff's

36. How often do you receive informal performance feedback (such as "monthly" comments)? 134 Answered

Never 42

☐

Monthly 44

☐

Quarterly 6

☐

Annually 9

☐

Intermittently 33

☐

37. Does informal performance feedback (outside of formal performance evaluations) assist you with your performance? 128 Answered

Not useful 27

☐

Somewhat useful 22

☐

Don't know 25

☐

Frequently useful 35

☐

Always useful 19

☐

38. I believe supervisors are adequately trained to conduct evaluations? 136 Answered

☐ Yes 59

☐ No 51

☐ I don't know 26

39. Are performance evaluations and/or monthly feedback ever perceived as punitive tools? 137 Answered

☐ Yes 64

☐ No 30

☐ I don't know 43

40. Do you have any observations or comments concerning the existing performance evaluation or monthly comment process? 71 Answered / 22 had no comment

41. Do you receive adequate training to perform your duties? 136 Answered

It's never the right training 5

☐

Some training is good, not most 43

☐

Don't know 6

☐

Most training is appropriate 66

☐

Almost always the right training 16

☐

INDEPENDENT WORK GROUP ASSESSMENT - Yolo County Sheriff's

42. I believe staff needs training in the following area(s): (you may choose more than one) 116 Answered

- ☐ Computer/Software/Technology 50
- ☐ Technical training specific to my particular job 46
- ☐ County Policies and Procedures 27
- ☐ Communication skills 64
- ☐ Harassment and Discrimination Prevention 25
- ☐ Ethics 40
- ☐ POST training 42

Other (please specify) 19

43. Do you believe rules governing the Departmental promotional processes are applied fairly? 128 Answered

Not at all 33 Not very confident 35 Somewhat confident 30 Confident 30 Very confident

☐☐☐☐☐

44. Do you believe you would be treated fairly in a promotional process? 128 Answered

☐ Yes 64

☐ No 64

45. If not, why do you believe you may not be treated fairly in a promotional process?

59 Answered

46. Have you experienced retaliation when reporting issues or concerns? 126 Answered

☐ Yes 32

☐ No 94

If so, please provide examples of retaliation:

47. Do you know how to access the formal grievance processes? 135 Answered

☐ Yes 81

☐ No 54

INDEPENDENT WORK GROUP ASSESSMENT - Yolo County Sheriff's

48. Comments about training, development and dispute resolution: 36 Answered

PERCEPTIONS OF SHERIFF

49. Do you believe the Sheriff manages the Department professionally? 133 Answered

- ☐ Yes 44
☐ No 61
☐ Do not know 28

50. Do you believe you can speak honestly with the Sheriff about issues and concerns? 134 Answered

- ☐ Yes 47
☐ No 66
☐ Do not know 21

51. Are you concerned that the Sheriff (or his representative) would retaliate if you reported a sensitive issue or concern? 133 Answered

- ☐ Yes 63
☐ No 37
☐ I don't know 34

Other (please specify) 8

52. The Sheriff is approachable. 137 Answered

No opinion/don't know 15 Strongly disagree 0 Disagree 43 Somewhat agree 29 Agree 50 Strongly agree 0

☐☐☐☐☐☐

53. The Undersheriff is approachable. 138 Answered

No opinion/don't know 19 Strongly disagree 0 Disagree 7 Somewhat agree 26 Agree 86 Strongly agree 0

☐☐☐☐☐☐

54. The Captains are approachable. 138 Answered

No opinion/don't know 11 Strongly disagree 28 Disagree 0 Somewhat agree 34 Agree 65 Strongly agree 0

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Other (please specify)

INDEPENDENT WORK GROUP ASSESSMENT - Yolo County Sheriff's

55. Comments about the Sheriff, Undersheriff or Captains: 59 Answered

56. If you would like to have a confidential interview with independent, outside consultants, you can make an appointment for a confidential phone or confidential, off-site in-person.

Please leave comments regarding other topics that should be addressed in this process.

33 Answered