

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

464



FROM: Executive Office

SUBMITTAL DATE:
September 2, 2008

SUBJECT: Response to the Grand Jury Report: Blythe Airport

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Approve with or without modifications, the attached response to the Grand Jury's recommendations regarding the Blythe Airport.
- 2) Direct the Clerk of the Board to immediately forward the Board's finalized response to the Grand Jury, to the Presiding Judge, and the County Clerk-Recorder (for mandatory filing with the State).

BACKGROUND: On July 1, 2008, the Board directed staff to prepare a draft of the Board's response to the Grand Jury's report regarding the Blythe Airport.

Section 933 (c) of the Penal Code requires that the Board of Supervisors comment on the Grand Jury's recommendations pertaining to the matters under the control of the Board, and that a response be provided to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court within 90 days.

Departmental Concurrence

Gary Christmas
GARY CHRISTMAS
Deputy County Executive Officer

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|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| FINANCIAL DATA | Current F.Y. Total Cost: | \$ N/A | In Current Year Budget: |
| | Current F.Y. Net County Cost: | \$ | Budget Adjustment: |
| | Annual Net County Cost: | \$ | For Fiscal Year: |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| SOURCE OF FUNDS: | Positions To Be Deleted Per A-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Requires 4/5 Vote | <input type="checkbox"/> |

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVE**

BY: *Bill Luna*

County Executive Office Signature

Dept's Recomm.: Consent Policy
 Per Exec. Ofc.: Consent Policy

**2007-2008 Grand Jury Report:
Blythe Airport**

While the County of Riverside owns the Blythe Airport, the City of Blythe has full operational responsibility for the airport pursuant to a lease agreement between the County and the city of Blythe. The Economic Development Agency will use its best efforts to facilitate resolution of the issues.

FINDINGS:

Finding 1. In compliance with a CEC directive dated February 6, 2006, the City of Blythe installed and activated Super AWOS on October 24, 2006. The Super AWOS was shut-off on March 16, 2007, because the FBO filed a complaint with FCC that the Super AWOS transmissions were interfering with FBO licensed Unicom frequency 122.8 MHz. As a result, pilots are not warned of the plume from BEP1.

Respondent agrees with the finding.

Finding 2. As of June 1, 2008, the City of Blythe had not complied with the CEC directive to designate a calm wind runway and change the traffic pattern from left-hand to right-hand by April 15, 2007. BEP1 has agreed to pay for any environmental analysis to determine the feasibility of changing the designation.

Respondent disagrees partially with the finding. We agree with the finding of a calm wind runway and disagree on changing the traffic pattern due to concerns that changing the traffic pattern would create more safety hazards than would be resolved.

Finding 3. Currently, Wolfe Enterprises has a FCC license to operate a Unicom at the airport frequency 122.8 MHz. The City of Blythe has been directed by CEC to install a Super AWOS Unicom at the airport, but does not have an FCC license. In addition, FAA guidelines do not permit two different warning systems operating at an uncontrolled airport.

Respondent agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation 1. Vigorously pursue an agreement with Wolfe Enterprises to purchase and/or transfer Wolfe Enterprises FCC license (frequency 122.8 MHz.) to the City of Blythe for operation of the Super AWOS Unicom.

The recommendation has been implemented .The Economic Development Agency , Aviation Division will send a letter to the City of Blythe requesting that they work with Wolfe Enterprises to secure a the Unicom frequency 122.8 MHz or secure a new frequency from the F.C.C. by February 3, 2009.

Recommendation 2. Reactivate the super AWOS that has been purchased by BPE1 that will notify pilots using Blythe Airport to avoid direct over flight of the power plant.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the future, a letter will be sent to the City of Blythe with our request prior to August 1, 2008.

Recommendation 3. Conduct an environmental review that has been funded by BEP1, of the designation of calm wind runway and/or a change in the traffic-landing pattern at the airport.

The Economic Development Agency, Aviation Division does not recommend changing of the traffic pattern. If changed it would create more safety issues than it would solve.