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Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation

Editorial Note: Although every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the material in this presentation, the scope of the material covered and the discussions undertaken lends itself to the possibility of minor transcription misinterpretations.

PRESENTATION BY
Leroy D. Baca
Sheriff, Los Angeles County
Topic: The Sheriff's Department in the 21st Century
December 7, 2000

Chairman Philibosian introduced Sheriff Leroy D. Baca of Los Angeles County and stated that the December 7th E & E Commission meeting marks the second anniversary of the Sheriff's taking the Oath of Office. Chairman Philibosian also remarked that Sheriff Baca has been an example of "economy and efficiency" as demonstrated with the consolidation of the Marshall's Department and the Sheriff's Department for the Court Bailiffing Services, by this action the Sheriff saved the county \$14M.

Sheriff Baca began by stating that the Sheriff's Department is a 16,000 member organization, with a \$1.6B budget. The department's complexity creates difficulties in service delivery to people who "walk-in" for assistance. He felt that it was important for him to know exactly what the liabilities were in the department's structure; therefore, in his first two and one half months in office, he audited the entire department (policy, budget, procedures, equipment, and facilities) using internal personnel trained in auditing. He found that the chains of command were not facilitating the organization with the fundamentals, specifically with supplies. When one radio car was needed the system tried to wait until twenty police radio cars were required to capitalize upon a volume discount. As a result of this realization Sheriff Baca stated that he created an internal Budget Planning Authority where top executives deal with the issues relative to the budget. This Authority has developed efficiencies and flattened the bureaucracy so that management processes were not "hung up" in the nine vertical divisions of the chains of command. Sheriff Baca said he asked the Board of Supervisors for four commanders with overall command authority, who were not bound by those vertical divisions. Sheriff Baca said he is creating a new dynamic where "no one can hide" behind committee decisions. Using this approach, accountability will be in "real time".

Sheriff Baca stated that the department is constructing three new Sheriff's stations: one in South Central Los Angeles (near Lennox on Imperial) which will also house the Probation Department; one in San Dimas; and one in Palmdale. The Sheriff also found that \$70M in the Inmate Welfare Fund had not been spent: as a result some of this money has been used to build the Biscailuz Recovery Center for drug addicts and domestic violence offenders. The Sheriff's Department has one of the largest recovery programs for inmates incarcerated at a municipal level.

The Sheriff's Department is also refurbishing the Sybil Brand Institute, which had been closed, with the objective of creating a learning center for women. In a jail environment women are easier to manage than

men; i.e. women don't normally escape and they generally respond positively to programs. The men are more problematic in more relaxed environments.

There is a master plan to turn the ranch into an agricultural center. All of the minimum-security housing has been removed, and new housing has been built for women, including a nursery in the center of the compound. Sheriff Baca explained that the goal of this effort is to deal with human problems that cause the incarceration of people, so that when they leave they are able to cope with their new freedom. He felt that things could change by virtue of what the department accomplishes within the jails.

Sheriff Baca calculates that there are over 2,000 mentally ill people in jail. The department has budgeted \$8M to provide follow-up medical treatment when they leave. Without treatment the mentally ill are caught in a cycle of reincarceration.

Sheriff Baca is partnering with the Salvation Army and the Veteran's administration to design and build a component at the Bell Shelter to address the problems of the homeless population. There are currently 180 beds in this facility, and he intends to expand the program to a total of 400 beds. This facility is anticipated to be a transitional living center, eliminating the need to house the homeless in the Twin Towers.

Sheriff Baca said that there is a 38% illiteracy rate in jails. The Sheriff wants to begin a program of cooperation with Community Colleges to provide distance learning so that those who qualify can begin their college course work while imprisoned, which is a different way of managing this population. The Sheriff intends to provide the 5,000 county inmates more opportunities to educate and rehabilitate them for their eventual incorporation into society.

The whole jail culture has changed. There is less tension between the inmates, as well as between the deputies and the inmates. For example, by utilizing trucks with gardening equipment, inmates are able to fulfill their obligations to clean up depressed neighborhoods; to help the homeless; and to rid the county of graffiti. This makes the inmates' life more meaningful.

Sheriff Baca said there would be a summit meeting on January 20, 2001 involving his Department, the City of Los Angeles (including the Mayor and his staff), and the Parks Department to put together a homeless population strategy. Sheriff Baca suggested transition-sleeping centers with open air, shade and washrooms. Communities lose economic strength when people are destitute and "sleeping on sidewalks". Sheriff Baca has learned that the organizations that should be closely involved (the Health Department, City Public Works, the Mental Health Department, the Police Department, and the Sheriff's Department) are not dealing with the homeless situation. Sheriff Baca stated that he has the money and the interest to coordinate the solutions to the homeless problem. The Sheriff's Department will no longer be a spectator to homelessness or the reactionary organization to mentally ill people. The inefficiencies are caused by the lack of coordination between all of the appropriate departments. Sheriff Baca reiterated that the Sheriff's Department belongs to all of us. It should be a friendly place to take one's frustrations, recognizing that there will be a response and a solution to problems. The City of Los Angeles needs more centers [similar to those in Pasadena, Burbank, Santa Monica, and San Fernando] where people can "walk and talk".

Sheriff Baca explained that the Sheriff's Department now operates the Compton Police Department under contract. There has been a similar inquiry from the Baldwin Park Police Department. Sheriff Baca commented that the regional law enforcement culture is changing, particularly its partnership with the FBI, and the implementation of a Computerized Countywide Crime Analysis Program. All police cars within the region are included in an "inter communications net" so that any emergencies can be communicated to all radio cars. Sheriff Baca felt that inefficiency is caused by separate entities not interfacing with each other, and that the Board of Supervisors need to be the leader in coordinating communication across the unincorporated areas of the county, and with incorporated cities and municipalities.

Commissioner Padilla complimented Sheriff Baca on his remarkable and impassioned presentation dealing with the intransigence of bureaucracies to implement ideas. Commissioner Padilla asked if the Sheriff would comment on the needs of the unincorporated areas and some of the political pitfalls that are found in the Sheriff Department's campaigns that are "helping the criminals" to become productive members of society.

Sheriff Baca stated that there would always be critics. It is important to have a belief in what you are doing, and not to allow the critics to "take the wheels off your wagon". If the idea doesn't work, the Department can quickly try another idea. The Sheriff's Department needs to undo what doesn't work. To implement this philosophy the Sheriff conducts the audits within the department, himself, every six months. He also audits neighborhoods, himself, to personally review any deterioration. The new sheriff's station is going to be located in an unincorporated area. In addition, there are more sheriffs' offices in the unincorporated area, including the Valley. Sheriff Baca said that he has sought additional funds to implement programs. As a result of these efforts the department has received \$96M to develop a crime lab for the combined use of the Los Angeles Police Department and Sheriff's Department from the State. Restructuring, proper management, organization and leadership are the Sheriff's components for solving problems

Commissioner Thompson stated that he admired what the Sheriff has done in Compton. Recently, he had a person tell him that he felt safe in his neighborhood. However, Commissioner Thompson felt that the Sheriff needed to increase his public relations efforts to explain what the Sheriff's Department is accomplishing in Compton. Sheriff Baca agreed that additional public relations efforts were necessary.

The most significant changes in the department's culture were the "core values" of the organization, and the definition the Sheriff's Department. The problem with individuals within law enforcement is that although they become technically good, they are not trained to be leaders. Sheriff Baca stated that he created the Deputy Sheriff's Leadership Institute, at which 800 people have studied, (secretaries, chiefs, deputies, and civilians from outside the department). As a result, everyone in the Sheriff's Department thinks of themselves as leaders who are able to effectively deal with the problems./P>

Sheriff Baca stated that his "core values" for the department are summarized within the following statement: "As leader of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, I pledge to honor and perform my duties with respect to the dignity of all people. Integrity to do what is right, and fight what is wrong. Wisdom to apply common sense, and fairness in all that I do, and the courage to stand against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and bigotry in all its forms."

Upon the conclusion of the Sheriff's remarks, Chair Philibosian thanked Sheriff Baca and recognized the value of his presentation to the Commission.

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Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 163, 500 West Temple St.,
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone (213) 974-1491 FAX (213) 620-1437 EEmail_eecomm@co.la.ca.us
WEB eec.co.la.ca.us