

The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

February 2003

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La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

Serving the communities of:
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Alpine
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Descanso
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Fernbrook
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Granite Hills
Grantville
Guatay
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Jacumba
Jamul
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Santa Ysabel
Sycuan
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State Needs Budget Lesson from SD County

This is the story of two governments—the County of San Diego and State of California.

San Diego County reports a stable budget, the result of years of strict fiscal discipline. California is in the throes of the worst budget crisis in State history.

San Diego County boasts measurable success when it comes to decreasing crime and building healthier families. California ranks 44th out of 50 states for providing adequate healthcare to residents and near the bottom in student test scores.

San Diego County's AA bond rating and low cash borrowing activity has earned respect from the financial community, while its emergency reserves give taxpayers piece-of-mind in a post-September 11th world.

California, meanwhile, is scrambling to cover a \$34 million financial crater. Governor Gray Davis is proposing to handoff a host of health programs to counties. To help counties pay for the programs they may unwillingly inherit, Davis wants the legislature to agree to an all-out taxing spree. His plan would hike income taxes by billions, raise the State sales tax and jack up tobacco taxes.

Both the County and the State benefited from the unprecedented economic boom of the mid 1990s. Both experienced a swell of revenue from advances in the technology sector and the new Internet marketplace.

Today, while one government spirals downward, the other stays afloat. What does the County know that California does not? The answer lies in the County's budget structure.

Guided by principles of good business, San Diego County has been ranked the best managed county in California and one of the three most effectively managed counties in the Nation by Syracuse University and *Governing Magazine*.

Unlike the State, the County has a structurally balanced budget. It uses one-time revenue to pay for one-time items and long-term revenue to pay for on-going programs.

Your property taxes, for example, give the County a dependable, steady stream of income year after year. The County uses this money to fund essential services that must not be interrupted like the hard work of sheriff's deputies, librarians and park rangers.

Unlike property taxes, one-time monies, such as State and Federal grants cannot be counted on year after year. The County uses these dollars to pay for one-time projects, like the construction of a

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State Budget Crisis

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new library or the replacement of a service vehicle.

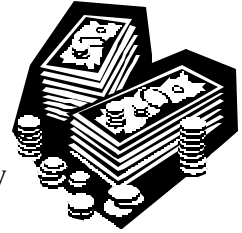
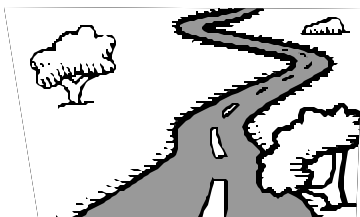
The County acts like a wise family that receives a \$500 tax refund. Does the family use the refund to replace an old, energy-sapping refrigerator, or does the family use the refund to pay the monthly bills of its two cell phones? If the family uses the money to pay cell phone bills, the money will last only a period of months. Eventually, because the family keeps using cell phones year after year, the \$500 will run out. The family will still need to find another revenue source to pay its cell phone bills and still will be stuck with a costly old refrigerator.

If, however, the family uses the one-time tax refund to buy a new refrigerator, the family can end the headache of relying on an outdated fridge *and* save on its electric bills. In the long run, the family can apply that savings toward its monthly cell phone bills.

The difference between the State and the County is also illustrated by each government's use of tobacco settlement dollars. Both received millions of dollars suing unscrupulous tobacco companies. While the County set up a trust fund to pay for health programs for decades to come, the State used the *entire* settlement to fill a *portion* of last year's budget gap. The County has guaranteed income to fund on-going health and emergency services into the future. The State's settlement is gone and its budget crisis remains.

The County's budget structure takes a little bit of financial know-how and a lot of diligence, but there's a much more basic budget principle that the State continues to ignore. The County doesn't spend beyond its means. Simply put, its expenses never exceed its income. Since the current governor first took office, the State revenues have *increased* by 28 percent. State spending has grown by 36 percent. This means that for every additional dollar collected, the State spends \$1.29.

Like you, I am outraged at our State's addiction to spending. I am even more outraged at the governor's plan which, if approved, forces counties to pay for the State's mess. Some good already may be coming from the crisis, however. Californians are demanding that the State budget be overhauled. Fortunately, there is a model to guide us in these reforms. The State needs to look no further than the nationally-acclaimed budget of San Diego County for a good place to start.

**Supervisor Jacob's****Improvements for a Dangerous Road**

If you live in or around Ramona you already know the dangers of State Route 67. The little white crosses along the route are reminders of the road's many deadly traffic accidents.

For years, residents and I

"This just in..."

have pleaded with the San Diego Association of Governments to improve 67. Late last month, SANDAG announced it was willing pay for a mandatory Project Study Report for the road.

This is the first step toward a safer 67!

How to Save Money by Planting Trees

Supervisor Jacob and the San Diego Regional Energy office want to help you conserve energy, save money and enhance

neighborhoods by strategically planting trees.

The San Diego Region Cool Communities Shade Tree Program has 8,300 beautiful shade trees just waiting for good homes. The program is especially looking to plant trees along the Route 125 corridor.

They'll supply the trees, stakes, planting and maintenance. They'll even help you find the perfect spot in your yard for your free tree!

For more information call (619) 222-TREE.

Holding the Line Against Deadly Methamphetamine

In years past, San Diego had the unfortunate distinction of being called the "methamphetamine capital of the world." Since the inception of the Methamphetamine Strike Force in 1996, that dubious title is no longer valid.

Today, the San Diego region is experiencing steady gains in the fight against meth and the evidence is in the Strike Force's sixth annual report.

The report shows a slowed trend of meth use and meth-related problems overall with a noted decrease among juvenile arrestees testing positive for meth. Based on interviews with arrestees, the report also shows that the drug's availability on our streets is down by 4% percent.

Through ongoing Strike Force education campaigns, law enforcement officials throughout the County have been training retailers to recognize suspicious purchases, such as the supplies needed to operate a drug lab. Retailers are also learning the laws restricting the sale of needed precursor chemicals.

The Strike Force believes that by decreasing availability of the key ingredients, meth cooks won't be able to brew toxic batches of the deadly stimulant.

The report notes that severe meth problems appear to have shifted to other areas of California. Although there has been a 6% increase in adult arrestees testing positive for meth last year, San Diego now ranks third behind Sacramento and San Jose in adult arrests for meth. Similarly, twenty-six labs were seized in the county during 2001. That's roughly two percent of the statewide total, and a miniscule portion of the 12,562 meth labs and dumpsites seized nationwide.



You can report meth related community problems or seek treatment for meth addiction by calling the San Diego County Methamphetamine Hotline at 1-877-No2Meth. The call is free and completely confidential.

Make Your Own Kids Safe Card!

Always keep a current video of your child walking and talking. Why? Because the tape can greatly aid law enforcement in the unlikely event your child becomes missing. Want more tips to keep kids safe? Visit diannejacob.com and make your own Kids Safe card. The tiny card features child safety tips for parents and tips for parents to share with their kids.

Stay Safe!

Get The Jacob Journal!

The Jacob Journal will be mailed to you on a regular basis by request only. So, if you like what you've read, fill out the form below and mail it back to us at 1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92101 or fax it to us at (619) 696-7253. We'll put you on our mailing list to get The Jacob Journal regularly!

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