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## **Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation**

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*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  
William T. Stonich  
Undersheriff  
County of Los Angeles Sheriff's Department**

**Topic: The Direction of the Sheriff's Department for 2003**

**November 7, 2002**

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Chairman Philibosian welcomed Undersheriff Stonich to the meeting.

Undersheriff Stonich thanked the Commission for having him speak and stated that he would be focusing his remarks on the current state of the Sheriff's Department.

The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department is the largest sheriff's department in the U.S. and second only to the New York City Police Department as a municipal police agency. Current staff is 15,000 sworn and professional staff. The Department's budget is \$1.65 billion with revenue from the following sources: \$658M provided by the County, \$447M from Prop 172 sales tax revenue, \$212M from law enforcement service contracts, \$111M from County Court services contracts, \$69M from the Federal Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), and the rest from Federal and State grants.

The Department conducts diverse policing operations whose primary responsibilities include:

- Bailiff, security and transportation services for the largest county court system in the world – 2,000 staff work out of 578 courtrooms in 59 separate courthouses and each day utilize 191 vehicles transporting an average of 1,600 inmates to and from jails and courts.
- Almost 5,000 personnel operate the largest jail system in the country. This includes 800 medical and 200 mental health professionals. The jail system consists of 12 jails and one inmate intake center that hold a daily average of 19,500 inmates. In comparison, New York City houses 14,000 inmates. The jail system handles more prisoners than 27 of the 50 state prison systems. The jail system holds 1,220 inmates charged with murder, over 2,500 inmates suffering from mental illness and 5,500 inmates must receive medical care. The jails also provide a variety of services for the inmates including alcohol and drug rehabilitation, domestic abuse counseling, basic education through high school level, library services and religious services and counseling.

4,700 Sheriff's personnel provide policing services to 2.7 million residents from 45 regional, community and sheriff's stations. Patrol services are provided to all unincorporated areas of the County and to 41 of the 88 independent cities in the County who have contracts with the Department. It also provides policing for 9 community colleges and for significant portions of the Metro Rail and Metro Link system.

- Specialized investigation & detective services provide support to patrol operations in the following ways. In 2001, the Homicide Bureau investigated 347 homicides over half of which were gang related murders. The Cold Case Unit is currently reviewing 3,000 unsolved murders in the County that span the last 20 years. This team review, utilizing the advances in DNA technology, has solved 29 murder cases. The Arson-Explosives Squad is world renowned and has been trained in terrorism and bomb construction by the Israeli military and the British bomb school. They in turn have provided explosives training for many other law enforcement agencies around the world. The Narcotics Bureau seized over 15,000 pounds of drugs, made over 9,400 arrests and seized over \$8M in drug-related cash and property. The Commercial Crimes Bureau investigates forgery/fraud, identity thefts and computer related crimes. In 2001, the Auto Theft Task Force recovered over 1,400 stolen vehicles and arrested over 600 suspects. The Major Crimes Bureau investigates vice activity, pharmaceutical crimes, career criminal crimes and kidnappings.
- Many specialized services are provided to independent cities in the County that are not policed by the Department. The newly created Office of Homeland Security is responsible for emergency and disaster preparedness and consists of an Aero Bureau with 18 aircraft, Special Enforcement, Emergency Operations, Safe Streets and COPS Bureaus. There is also the Reserve Forces Bureau with consists of 1,000 reserve deputies and 4,000 volunteers and the Terrorism Early Warning Group. The people in the reserves are a tremendous asset to the Department. The Technical Services Division has 800 personnel who provide technical support in the Scientific Services, Fleet Management, Records and Identification, and Communications Bureaus.

The Department has developed and implemented several innovative programs. The Vital Intervention and Direction Alternatives (VIDA) is a "boot-camp" style program for at-risk youth run by the Department with assistance from branches of the military and community volunteers. Over 1,500 youth have participated in the program. The Los Angeles County Homeless Safety Center is in the development stage by the Correctional Services Division. This will be a one-stop facility for the homeless where they will be able to obtain a variety of services. The Los Angeles Regional Crime Laboratory is a partnership between the Department, the Los Angeles Police Department and California State University at Los Angeles. The facility, currently being developed, is located at Cal State Los Angeles and will be jointly operated by the three partner organizations. Sheriff Baca was able to obtain \$92M in state funding for this project which will streamline the modernize forensic investigations in the County. The Western Public Safety Center is a state-of-the-art training center which will include training for emergency vehicle operations, weapons and homeland security. Another accomplishment this year was the successful passage of Measure "C" which authorized the expansion of the Sheriff's Department by adding an additional assistant sheriff and 4 division chiefs. This is the first major organizational change in the Department since the late 1960's.

Undersheriff Stonich handed out several documents for Commission review: The LASD Strategic Plan and papers on the Deputy Sheriff Leadership Institute and the Office of Independent Review. Sheriff Baca has encouraged his department to become a learning-based organization and the Department has partnered with several private universities to provide on-site college education for the Department's personnel. Over 700 members are currently enrolled in college courses.

The Department's budget was cut by nearly \$100M for fiscal year 2002-2003. This dramatically reduces the services that the Department can provide to the community. Hiring during this fiscal year has virtually been eliminated. In light of these cuts, Sheriff Baca has recognized the need for a stable funding source to strengthen services and to improve the ability to respond to extraordinary emergencies. This has been further magnified by the events of September 11, 2001. The Sheriff has developed a strategic plan which includes: the creation of permanent sworn law enforcement positions for public safety, local anti-terrorism and

homeland security operation and “first-response” capabilities to extraordinary emergencies; interoperable communications and equipment for law enforcement, fire and rescue personnel in all the municipalities within the County for “mutual aid” effectiveness; expansion of inter-agency coordination and standardized training for all public safety services; permanent funding for basic emergency and trauma care services. In order to pay for these elements of the strategic plan, the Sheriff plans to team with community partners to pass a ½-cent sales tax increase. This increase would allocate 2/3 of the funds for public safety and homeland security and 1/3 for emergency and trauma care. This would net approximately \$500M annually and provide a stable funding source.

Undersheriff Stonich concluded his remarks and invited questions from the floor.

Commissioner Thompson asked if the sales tax increase is intended to replace funding for the Department or if it is supplemental. Undersheriff Stonich replied that it is supplemental. He stated that 10 years ago the Department’s budget was \$100M greater than it is today. During this time, the Department has grown by a third both in size and in responsibility. Commissioner Thompson expressed his concern that other funding would be removed from the Department as a result of its getting the new funding and no real progress would be made as has happened in other situations. Undersheriff Stonich responded that the Sheriff is working with County Counsel to define the measure in such a way as to prevent that from happening.

Commissioner Fuhrman asked when this measure is expected to go on the ballot. Undersheriff Stonich replied that the soonest would be November, 2003 and possibly as late as March, 2004.

Commissioner Hill mentioned that it was her understanding that the Sheriff’s Department was supporting the Los Angeles Police Department in their need for officers and asked what the impact is. Undersheriff Stonich responded that this idea was a proposal that was politically motivated but that it never became a formal request from LAPD to the Sheriff’s Department.

Commissioner Lewis asked how the Department has made up the shortfall of funding during the past 10 years. Undersheriff Stonich stated that Prop 172 monies have been the biggest source of funds.

Commissioner Fuhrman commented that one of the Department’s largest expenses is in custody and it appears that one of the biggest operational challenges is the daily transportation of huge numbers of people from jails and courthouses. Why is that still being done? Undersheriff Stonich stated that these solutions have been explored over the years but have received great resistance from those who defend inmates.

Commissioner Balderrama asked for more information about the homeless shelters. Undersheriff Stonich replied the reality is that there is a significant homeless population much of it centralized in downtown Los Angeles. LASD winds up having to house and give medical care to these people because they do commit crimes. They put themselves in a position to be arrested so they can get off the street.

Commissioner Barcelona commented that the LASD \$100M budget cut impacted the Antelope Valley in several programs. In the ½-cent proposal, will gang prevention be considered in the projects to be funded? Undersheriff Stonich responded that it certainly will be.

Commissioner Sylva said that she is interested in issues of technology and asked what specific resources and crimes Undersheriff Stonich was referring to when he mentioned technology crimes. Undersheriff Stonich responded that people in the Detective Division with technological skills investigate a wide variety of crimes such as people who molest children on the internet and identity theft crimes. Law enforcement is behind the curve in the area of cyber crime and more resources need to be focused on this field.

Commissioner Padilla asked Undersheriff Stonich to comment further on exposure the Sheriff’s Department has in regards to Workers’ Compensation claims. He also asked why deputies receive their initial training in jails. Also the dynamics of public safety services to contract cities and unincorporated areas. Undersheriff Stonich replied that the time spent by new deputies in the jail system is a seasoning time where the officer has to think since weapons are not permitted in the custody environment. The value of the seasoning begins to diminish over time and keeping deputies in the custody environment for 3-5 years isn’t wise. The only

way a deputy can get out of the jails is when a new deputy comes in and replaces the deputy who has seniority.

The contract cities pay for the services that are provided at whatever level the contract designates and the unincorporated areas do not. The unincorporated area is where the Department is reducing staff when the cuts take place. Unless a contract city changes its level of services, the service level remains the same.

The risk management issue is one the Department is very involved in because it is a business that involves tremendous risk. Pursuits are a huge liability and, as a result of conscious decisions at the Department, there has not been a death or serious accident of a deputy or a suspect in a pursuit during the past 5-6 years. This is the result of cultural, policy and training changes within the Department. A determination is made by the Watch Commander before a pursuit is undertaken based on the value of catching the suspect.

Former Commissioner Simmons inquired how the partners in the forensic lab will work together in the same building and still not interfere with each other. Undersheriff Stonich stated that the idea behind the lab is that over time, the partners will actually begin to function as one organization rather than competing ones.

Commissioner Fuhrman commented that one of the task forces of the Commission is actively looking at the issue of Workers' Compensation and that among the 95,000 County employees, there are 20,000 open Workers' Compensation claims. He asked how many of those claims are from the Sheriff's Department and what is the Department doing to address them? Undersheriff Stonich replied that the number of claims from the Department is significant. He noted that their business has a great deal of physical and stress risks. The most frequent injury is back injury. One of the things that the Department is doing is looking at a lighter weight more flexible belt that holds all the equipment a deputy must carry.

Commissioner Ikejiri stated that he was recently in Washington, DC during the sniper situation and it appeared on television that there was great coordination between the various law enforcement groups involved. Do we have that in Los Angeles? Undersheriff Stonich said yes, the Sheriff, by law, is the coordinator for emergency operations in both Los Angeles and Orange counties. The cooperation among the Department and its partners, independent police as well as state and federal agencies, is phenomenal.

Commissioner Balderrama asked what the response time is in contract cities in contrast to unincorporated areas. Undersheriff Stonich responded that response time will vary depending on traffic, geographic layout and other factors. In general, the greater the service level of a contract, the faster the response time.

Commissioner Baltierrez asked the Undersheriff to talk about the Needle Exchange Bill and what it would take to get the Department's endorsement. Undersheriff Stonich offered his opinion that Sheriff Baca often supports issues that traditional law enforcement resists.

Chairman Philibosian brought up the transportation of prisoners issue. He commented that the Commission has made a number of studies of various issues that touch on the Sheriff's Department and asked if it would be any assistance to the Department if the Commission were to study this issue from a neutral perspective and make some recommendations. Undersheriff Stonich responded that he and the Sheriff would welcome such a study.

Chairman Philibosian expressed the appreciation of the Commission to Undersheriff Stonich for his time in making his presentation and assured him that the Commission will be reviewing in the future ways to assist the Sheriff's Department.

[Return to Top of Presentation](#)

[Return to Agenda](#)



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