

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS
ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

BOARD AGENDA # B-14

Urgent _____ Routine X

AGENDA DATE March 13, 2001

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES DK NO _____
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES _____ NO X

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON 1-877-2ASSIST, THE NEW COUNTYWIDE TOLL-FREE PHONE SERVICE TO OUR RESIDENTS FOR REPORTING OF ISSUES WITHIN STANISLAUS COUNTY.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: APPROVE THE UPDATE REPORT REGARDING 1-877-2ASSIST, THE COUNTY WIDE TOLL-FREE NUMBER.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost of the service will be absorbed in existing department budgets.

BOARD ACTION No. 2001-187
On motion of Supervisor Paul, Seconded by Supervisor Mayfield,
and approved by the following vote,
Ayes: Supervisors: Mayfield, Blom, Caruso, and Chair Paul
Noes: Supervisors: None
Excused or Absent: Supervisors: Simon
Abstaining: Supervisor: None
1) X Approved as recommended
2) _____ Denied
3) _____ Approved as amended
Motion:

ATTEST: REAGAN M. WILSON, Clerk By: Christine Ferraro File No.

UPDATE ON 1-877-2ASSIST, THE NEW COUNTYWIDE TOLL-FREE PHONE SERVICE TO OUR RESIDENTS FOR REPORTING OF ISSUES WITHIN STANISLAUS COUNTY.

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DISCUSSION: On January 30, 2001, the Board authorized the Chief Executive Office to establish a countywide, toll-free number that residents of the community could call to reports hazards and nuisances at any time of the day or night.

The toll-free number, 1-877-2ASSIST, is in place and ready to begin accepting calls with your approval of the update today.

How Calls Will Be Handled

During working hours (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.), the calls will be answered by staff at the Department of Environmental Resources (DER). After hours and on weekends, Answer America, an answering service that currently answers after-hours calls for County Animal Services and Public Works Departments, will pick up the calls. Answer American also picks up after-hours calls for the city of Modesto. Both DER and Answer America have Spanish-speaking staff.

When someone calls in during working hours, the person will either be connected to the appropriate department or be given the number of the appropriate department.

Staff has assembled a list of possible complaints and issues and the telephone number for the departments or agencies responsible for handling them. We have made sure that a live person will answer the numbers so that the customer doesn't get lost in someone's phone mail.

The staff will be asking the caller to identify the location of the problem. If it's a problem that is in an unincorporated area or is the responsibility of a county agency, it will be referred to the appropriate agency. For example, if the caller is reporting a dead cow along a county road, we will either connect them or give them the number of county Animal Services.

UPDATE ON 1-877-2ASSIST, THE NEW COUNTYWIDE TOLL-FREE PHONE SERVICE TO OUR RESIDENTS FOR REPORTING OF ISSUES WITHIN STANISLAUS COUNTY.
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DISCUSSION
(continued)

If, however, the problem is the responsibility of a city – a cracked sidewalk in Newman, for example – the caller will be referred to the appropriate city.

When a call comes in after hours, Answer America will only be referring emergency calls. Non-emergency complaints will be referred to DER via fax by 7:30 a.m. the next weekday morning.

When DER receives the faxed complaints or calls made each weekday morning, staff will call the customer at the number provided. If staff is unable to reach the customer, they will leave a message; if they are unable to leave a message, they will make several more attempts that day and the next day.

Our goal is to be responsive to the citizen's needs, not pass their calls from agency to agency but rather have staff information available to resolve issues immediately, whenever possible.

How the Number Will Be Marketed

Public Information Officer Virginia Madueno will present an overview of the multi-media marketing campaign at the meeting. But in general, the 1-877-2ASSIST will be Marketed in English and Spanish, using a variety of media - television, radio, newspapers and possibly billboards. It will also be listed in the new Pacific Bell Telephone book, which will be distributed in July.

POLICY
ISSUE:

This meets the Board's priorities for delivering excellent community service and promoting efficient government operations.

STAFFING
IMPACT:

There is no staffing impact.