SUMMARY:

Approve proposed responses to pending recommendations for FY 2004-2005 Grand Jury Reports.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In March of each year the County Executive Office prepares a follow-up response to the Grand Jury addressing pending recommendations from the prior fiscal years' reports. Pending recommendations contain original responses of "requires further analysis" or "will be implemented in the future". The exhibit in this ASR contains the follow-up responses from all departments that had pending recommendations.

Status Update on Open Implementation Items

Report: November 2, 2004, General Election Orange County, California
Released: February 24, 2005

Recommendation #8.3.2
County election officials, including the BOS, should lobby state legislators to pass legislation that would change Election Day voting to the methods used in early voting, wherein there is no specific precinct.

Original Response
The recommendation requires further analysis

Current Status
The Recommendation has been implemented
The legislature and the Secretary of State have explored "super voting centers", modeled after such voting centers in Colorado. There has been resistance to this from the policy makers at the state level (partly because of the fluid situation with voting systems throughout the state). It is anticipated that they will continue to look at options that would allow methods similar to those used in early voting (most likely following the 2008 Presidential Election and the stabilization of voting systems in California).

Recommendation #8.3.4
Voter instruction sheets for casting electronic ballots should be simplified (less verbiage).

Original Response
The recommendation requires further analysis

Current Status
The Recommendation has been implemented
The ROV did make modifications to the instruction sheets based on feedback and changes in procedures (as used in the 2005 elections). It should be noted that during a recent survey (conducted at 3 poll sites in Laguna Woods during the December 6, 2005 Congressional General Election) over 90% of the voters sampled did not look at the instruction flyer, despite being told by the poll workers what the instruction sheet was for prior to voting. All of this will change once again due to the state mandate of a Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) that must be in place prior to any election on the DRE system (under SB1438). This will give us an opportunity (during the June 2006 Primary Election) to provide even more simplified instructions for the VVPAT and DRE system.

Recommendation #8.4.1
The Registrar of Voters and the Board of Supervisors' subcommittee on elections should seek, with the County's representatives in the State Legislature, counting efficiencies that more closely match the capabilities of electronic voting.

Original Response
The recommendation requires further analysis

Current Status
The recommendation has been implemented
This recommendation was implemented in-house during the elections of 2005. The Registrar of Voters changed the method by which we count absentee ballots (utilizing a more efficient system). This allowed us to keep up with the volume of absentee ballots returned during the October 4th, November 8th, December 6th and December 13th elections. In addition, we developed and implemented a new method of reporting these results (in conjunction with the counting efficiencies of electronic voting), which allowed us to report every 30 minutes and provide live links to our counting via web-based technology (the first of its kind in the United States). These improvements allowed our office to provide critical updates to the public in a more resourceful manner. In addition, the legislature is looking at the possibility of extending the time allowed to begin processing absentee ballots in future elections. We will continue to monitor this progress as well as look for ways to constantly improve our counting methods.

Recommendation #8.4.2
The ROV should publish a comparison of the costs of counting electronic ballots versus the cost of counting paper ballots.

Original Response
The recommendation requires further analysis

Current Status
The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future
We will have the opportunity to conduct a study during the upcoming April 11, 2006 35th Senate District Primary election. We will conduct this election using only paper ballots (due to the mandates of SB1438) because the Hart VVPAT system will not be certified in time (as managed by the Secretary of State's office). This will give us an opportunity to conduct actual cost comparisons between the 35th Senate District and the 48th Congressional District election (conducted on the DRE system).