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Grand jury faults bug-control agency

By Kevin Parrish
Staff Writer

STOCKTON — The agency that protects San Joaquin County by killing dangerous bugs and vermin has come under grand jury criticism for the condyean in a row.

The county Mosquito and Vector Control District — which as its mission “comprehensive vector surveillance and control services to enhance public health and quality life” — was targeted by the 12-13 grand jury for three

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areas involving its 11-member governing board:

- Open-meeting violations.
- Failing to understand health benefits trustees approved for themselves — and lacking in

basic understanding of district finances.

- A sense of entitlement on the part of some trustees and appointments to the governing board.

“We certainly respect the efforts of the grand jury to ensure county residents are receiving the most efficient and responsible service,” said Ed Lucchesi, district manager. “If there are efforts we need to improve on, we will look into it. This may cause us to do a self-evaluation.” Lucchesi, a district employee for 26 years, replaced longtime

manager John Stroth last summer.

The current grand jury investigated two complaints involving the Brown Act, California’s open-meeting law, and found no violations had occurred.

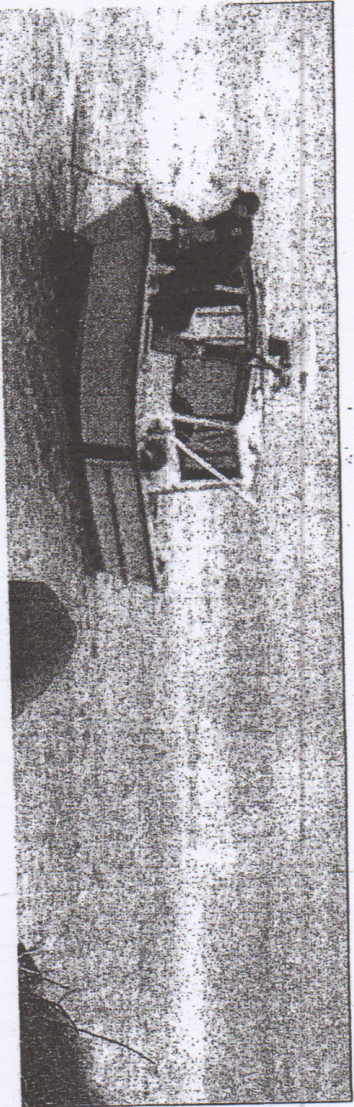
According to its report, posted Tuesday, the grand jury did, however, find other areas of concern: a lack of transparency regarding district board meetings, lack of understanding by trustees, a failure to grasp district finances, concerns over trustee appointments and the board’s governance structure.

The mosquito-and-vector control district’s legal counsel is Stockton attorney Chris Eley.

“The report states that the district board ignores the peoples’ right to be informed. I think that mischaracterizes the actions of the district and the board.”

Eley said the criticisms were minor. He said the board “has done a good job in keeping up the level of service” during difficult financial times.

“Trustees are community members who take time every SEE GRAND JURY, PAGE A4



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