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KEVIN PARRISH, ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR | (209) 546-9264 | kparrish@recordnet.com | fax (209) 547-8186

Local

The Record
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Taxpayer watchdog questions mosquito board's benefits

Trustees say
health coverage
is out of line

Zachary K. Johnson
is Staff Writer

LOCKTON — Since the governing board for the San Joaquin County Mosquito and Vector Control District passed a 2009 budget giving itself access to same health benefits available to employees, the district paid out more than \$110,000 each, dental and vision benefits to some of its trustees.

The San Joaquin Taxpayers' Association last month released a report on Mosquito and Vector Control District compensation detailing the cost of benefits.

District officials said they surveyed other governing bodies for districts in San Joaquin County and vetted the legality of the move before taking a vote.

Trustees, who only meet once a month, gave themselves access to health benefits, taxpayer association President David Renison said. "Legal or not, that conduct is below the standard most people expect of community service."

Information for the Mos-

quito District board posted online listed that trustees earned \$100-a-month for expenses, but it didn't indicate how much compensation trustees are actually receiving, Renison said.

Four of the district's 11 trustees are appointed by the county and each of San Joaquin County's seven cities also has an appointee.

Trustee health benefits was discussed in public sessions before the resolution passed July 21, 2009, said Frances Groen, president of the board and a member at the time of the vote. He is not receiving any health benefits through the district.

Groen said service on the board can mean spending long, uncompensated hours outside of the monthly meetings. "In light of this and for those who had the need — we thought this would be a fair thing," Groen said. "We didn't want it to be a hardship for our fellow trustees."

Before the vote, the mosquito district looked at benefits offered by others, such as school and irrigation districts. "We spent some time reviewing that, making sure we would not be out of line."

Recently retired districtman-
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Trustee health benefits

Members of the San Joaquin County Mosquito and Vector Control District Board of Trustees were not receiving health benefits through the district before board members voted themselves the benefits in 2009. Here's a look at the contribution toward combined monthly premiums for each of the board members receiving the benefits in 2012. Six of the 11 trustees receive benefits.

Medical Dental Vision

Monthly district contribution*

Trustee	Benefits	\$0	\$400	\$800	\$1,200	\$1,600
Frank DeBenedetti	Medical	\$82				
Jack Fiori **	Medical	\$444				
Gary Lambdin	Medical	\$82				
Mika Mame	Medical	\$1,206				
Greg O'Leary	Medical	\$1,588				
Marc Warnerham	Medical	\$1,287				

* As of June 2012

** Fiori is a retired district employee who has already received benefit

Source: San Joaquin County Taxpayers' Association

KOTY THAKSEN/The Record