

**CIVIL GRAND JURY 2022
TRINITY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**



Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Report

Release Date: _____

2022 TRINITY COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY ABANDONED VEHICLE ABATEMENT REPORT (DER 2022-001)



SUMMARY

Over the past several years, the idyllic remote mountain communities of Trinity County have been blighted by the wanton abandonment of cars, trucks, and recreational vehicles. These vehicles are often left abandoned for months, or even years, and become a “Public Nuisance Vehicle” defined by California Vehicle Code 22710 (c) as...

“Any vehicle that is abandoned, wrecked, dismantled, or any inoperative part thereof that is on public or private property...that creates a condition tending to reduce the value of private property, promotes blight and deterioration, invites plundering, creates fire hazards, constitutes an attractive nuisance endangering the health and safety of minors, harbors rodents and insects, or jeopardizes, health, safety, and general welfare is a public nuisance.”

The State of California has an Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program for counties to adopt that can assist them with the abatement of such vehicles before they become a public nuisance. It generates revenues from registration fees and returns this money to participating counties to sustain a program of their own. Trinity County’s Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program,

established in 1994, operates on these revenues alone without any County General Fund money to address the abandoned vehicle problem.

A 2022 Trinity County Grand Jury investigation of the County's Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program has determined that the revenues from the registration fees have been insufficient to adequately abate all abandoned vehicles and cover all the AVA Program's expenses. The backlog of unabated vehicles that still exist indicates that the scope of the problem far exceeds the ability of the program to fully solve under its current funding.



In addition, the current financial and personnel structure of the County's program contributes to the buildup of public nuisance vehicles. Because no General Funds are used, there is no required annual evaluation by the Board of Supervisors or oversight by any board or community stakeholders. While grant funding is available through the State of California's Clean California Grant, the County has no funding for its current grant writer to take on the application and administration of this grant opportunity. The

program's current budget only allows for a part time employee that will work one day a week to follow up on reports of abandoned vehicles. In the absence of additional funding and manpower, the unabated vehicles sit for months, or even years. This is the definition of a public nuisance vehicle, leading to a dumping site for toxic wastes and trash.

A lack of information on the program also contributes to the backlog of abandoned vehicles. The County's website offers very little information for citizens to report a problem or to learn about the program. Press releases and social media presence are also lacking to inform the public of what to do about a vehicle that has been abandoned.

The Trinity County Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors revisit the funding of the County's Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program to include grant opportunities available that other counties have secured. In addition, the Board should review the structure of the program to expand the size of its workforce and to increase the amount of annual oversight of the program. Finally, the Board should review the visibility of the program on its website and social media to provide public information on the County's Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program and assistance for citizens to report these vehicles.

GLOSSARY

AV Abandoned Vehicle A vehicle that is left abandoned for 10 days or less.

AVA Abandoned Vehicle Abatement

BOS Board of Supervisors

CAO County Administrative Officer

Caltrans California Department of Transportation

CHP California Highway Patrol

DMV Department of Motor Vehicles

FY Fiscal Year

PNV Public Nuisance Vehicle

RV Recreational Vehicle

TC Trinity County

BACKGROUND

The Abandoned Vehicle Abatement (AVA) Program in Trinity County (TC) is tasked with the removal of Abandoned Vehicles (AV). A backlog of AVs in remote portions of the County has developed due to the cost of abating all of these vehicles. These less-traveled areas of the County are more prone to be dump sites due to the lack of traffic and law enforcement presence. These AVs become Public Nuisance Vehicles (PNV) as they become targets for the dumping of trash and toxic waste by others who see this as an opportunity to avoid paying for the proper disposal of their waste. To abate these vehicles, all this waste must be disposed of, and this further adds to the cost of abatement. The environmental hazards, vandalism, arson (with the potential for wildfires), and the eyesore associated with such vehicles make this an issue in need of attention.

In 1967, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) began a program to assist counties to deal with abandoned vehicles. Over the past decades, it has been amended and expanded to the present program.

“The California Highway Patrol's (CHP) Abandoned Vehicle Abatement (AVA) Program was designed to provide guidance to counties who wish to develop and administer AVA Authorities. The AVA Program is recognized as a means to remove abandoned vehicles that create a public nuisance and a health or safety hazard.

Currently, there are thirty-seven counties in the State of California participating in the AVA program. Additional counties continue to request sample plans to develop local plans in conformance with the AVA guidelines.” www.chp.ca.gov/Programs-Services/For-Law-Enforcement/Abandoned-Vehicle-Abatement

Revenues for the AVA Program are received by participating counties from the State of CA based on Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) fees. Per CA Vehicle Code 22710(1), following approval of the County Board of Supervisors for ten-year intervals, a \$1.00 fee may be collected by the DMV for each vehicle registered in the State. Additionally, per CA Vehicle Code 9250.7(2), certain commercial vehicles can be charged an additional \$2.00 (for a total of \$3.00) by the DMV. The State places these revenues in the State’s Abandoned Vehicle Trust Fund for dispersal to participating counties. Of the five counties that border TC (Humboldt, Siskiyou, Shasta, Tehama, and Mendocino counties), only two (Shasta and Siskiyou) do not participate in this program. Other Northern California counties that participate are Butte, Del Norte, and Lake. Clearly, TC is not the only county in which abandoned vehicles present a problem.

Often, cars and RVs break down and their owners must determine how to get that vehicle removed from public or private property. This can take time, especially when the cost is high. The CA Vehicle Code (22660 - 22710) requires that vehicles be removed and gives the registered owner 10 days to remove a vehicle. The consensus of both County and State officials interviewed was that the vehicles that are abandoned longer than 10 days are primarily left by people without financial means to legally abate them, individuals involved in a crime, or transients who leave vehicles that no longer function. Even when the registered owner is located to reimburse the AVA Program, it is rare that payments are received. RVs are even more prone to be abandoned because there is no local place to salvage them and the cost to do so legally is prohibitive. Lack of information on legal options for registered owners and the cost of these legal options make it very tempting to just abandon the problem.

In 1994, the Trinity County Board of Supervisors (BOS) established an ordinance (Trinity County, CA Code of Ordinances Chapter 10.60) and authorized General Services as the Service Authority to oversee an AVA Program. Since entering this program, the abatement of abandoned vehicles on State highways and County roads in TC is the responsibility of the TC Abatement Officer. This position is under the supervision of the General Services Department, which uses the CHP Handbook and County Codes as the procedural guides for abatement policy.

In May of 2021, the retirement of the existing Abatement Officer left a void in the AVA program for the remainder of that year. In early 2022, the Grand Jury did a search of the Trinity County Employment webpage www.trinitycounty.org/Employment, finding that there was still a vacancy for an Abatement Officer. The position was posted (see Appendix A) as a part time job at a range of \$15.80-\$19.21 per hour. In the absence of an Abatement Officer, a General Services staff assumed responsibility for the needed AVA work from May 2021 until the Abatement Officer position was finally filled in August of 2022.

METHODOLOGY

Over a period of seven months, the Jury:

- Made inquiries to discover how TC's AVA Program functioned
- Conducted online research to determine how other counties' AVA Programs were managed and to learn more about the State agencies involved in abatement
- Collected photographs of AVs that they encountered throughout the County in their daily routines
- Conducted interviews of TC personnel, representatives of CA State agencies and local business owners involved in the AVA issue

Interviews Conducted

Trinity County Employees:

- General Services personnel
- County Administration Office personnel

California State Employees:

- Caltrans personnel
- CHP personnel

Local Businesses:

- Towing and dismantling businesses and other businesses involved in abatement

Documents Reviewed (* see copy in Appendix):

- CHP Handbook "Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Handbook" online version [Abandoned Vehicle Abatement \(ca.gov\)](http://AbandonedVehicleAbatement.ca.gov)
- Trinity County Code of Ordinances Chapter 10.60 - ABANDONED VEHICLES online [Title 10 - VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC | Code of Ordinances | Trinity County, CA | Municode Library](http://Title10-VEHICLESANDTRAFFIC|CodeofOrdinances|TrinityCounty,CA|MunicodeLibrary)
- DMV Abatement Authorization Form*
- Trinity County Board of Supervisors (BOS) Meeting Minutes
- Letter of Intent to DMV/Resolution Extending Vehicle Abatement Fees *

- Vehicle Abatement Officer Job Posting*
- Abatement Income & Expenses Report (Fiscal Years 2017/18 through 2020/21)
- Abatement Expenditures & Revenues Ledger (Fiscal Years 2019/20 through 2021/22)
- CA State Controller's Office AVA Reports (Fiscal Years 2017/18 through 2021/22)

Research Conducted

Adjacent County Websites:

- Mendocino <https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/planning-building-services/code-enforcement>
- Humboldt <https://humboldt.gov/1380/Online-Reporting>
- Tehama <https://www.co.tehama.ca.us/government/departments/environmental-health>

Other Northern California County Websites:

- Del Norte <https://www.co.del-norte.ca.us/departments/CodeEnforcement>
- Butte <https://www.buttecounty.net/dds/Meetings/AVA> (this their AVA Service Authority) and <http://www.buttecounty.net/Butte-County-Connect> (this is an interactive reporting feature)
- Lake
- http://www.lakecountyca.gov/Government/Directory/Community_Development

DISCUSSION

There are four aspects of the abatement process:

- 1) The ongoing daily process of responding to reports of recent AVs currently on TC's heavily traveled public roadways. This aspect of the program will be discussed in the "Timely Abatement" section below.
- 2) Assisting private property owners to abate vehicles on their property. This aspect will be discussed in the "Private Abatement" section.
- 3) RVs pose a particular set of problems to the AVA Program and will be discussed in the "RV Abatement" section.
- 4) The backlog of AVAs (both cars and RVs) on remote or seldom traveled roadways that have been abandoned for years. This is the most visible aspect of the issue and the most difficult to resolve. This most problematic aspect of abatement will be discussed in the "Eyesore Abatement" section.

Other major concerns in the TC AVA program are:

- 1) Adequate funding of the program
- 2) The County Department(s) best suited to manage the AVA Program
- 3) Adequate staffing for the scope of the problem in such a large County

These concerns will be discussed in the “Budget Study” and “Other Considerations” sections.

Timely Abatement

When an AV occurs on a public road or highway, it is often law enforcement personnel or a knowledgeable resident of TC who knows how to report it. For the average citizen, however, the reporting process is difficult due to the lack of clarity in knowing what department handles these reports. Public complaints, for lack of information, might logically go to law enforcement, which would have to refer the



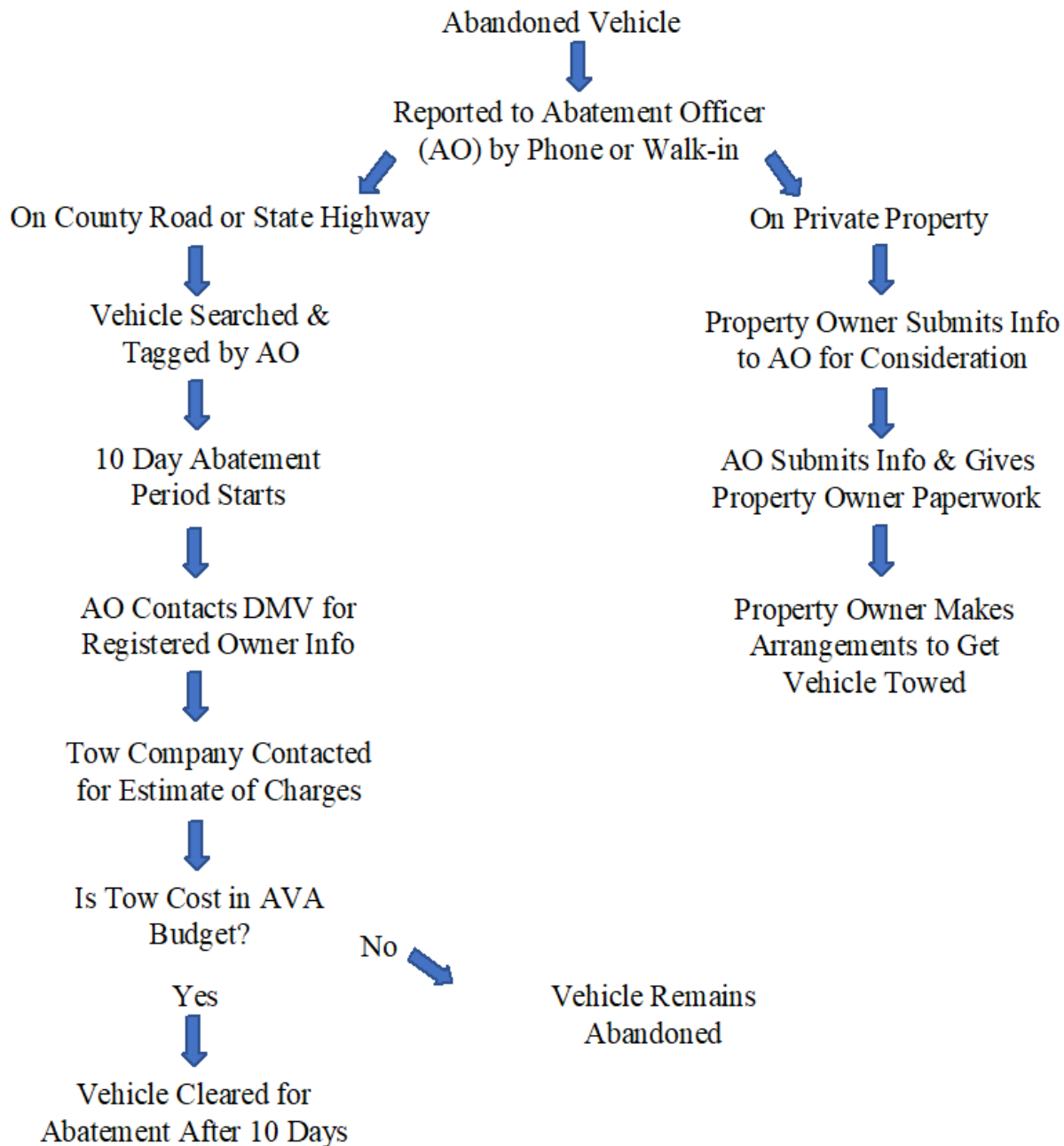
problem to the proper department. On TC’s homepage, there is no visible link, and a search for “Vehicle Abatement” leads to General Services web page with an email contact and a phone number with voicemail. Additionally, there is no program information or Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to guide the user.

Other neighboring counties’ websites have online features that provide guidance to facilitate reporting abandoned vehicles. For example, “I Want To...” drop-down menus that include “Report a Crime” or “Report A Code Violation”. Additionally other counties provide an online reporting capability, with downloadable pdf forms to be faxed, mailed, or emailed, etc. with more detailed instructions on reporting AVs. This additional information, readily available to the public, provides a proactive approach to AVA, and speeds up the abatement process.

Once an AV is reported in TC, the actual abatement process goes smoothly when handled by the Abatement Officer. A form is submitted to the DMV (see Appendix B) and the search for the registered owner is conducted. The AVA Program requires a minimum of 10 days for the registered owner to claim their vehicle once tagged for abatement. AVs generally sit for the full

10 days, which allows time for the vehicle to be defaced, burned, stripped for parts, or loaded up with trash and toxic waste. The only way a vehicle can be towed immediately is if it has been cited by law enforcement (for being inoperable or expired registration), but this is funded differently and does not come out of AVA Program funds. This process is shown in the following “AVA Process Flow Chart”.

AVA Process Flowchart



The potential toxic wastes in such a vehicle include but are not limited to:

- batteries (these are generally stolen quickly and recycled, as they have a core charge that can be redeemed)
- approximately 5-6 quarts motor oil
- approximately 12-35 gallons of gasoline (usually siphoned/stolen quickly)
- approximately 5 liters ethylene glycol (antifreeze)

In addition, more toxic wastes and trash can be added to the vehicle as it waits for abatement, and a PNV begins. If this occurs, the total cost of that abatement increases, as these wastes now become the responsibility of the AVA Program. Often, the toxic wastes spill out onto the highway, and then become a road hazard. This requires the assistance of the TC Department of Transportation to mitigate and adds additional costs to the County.

Generally, these timely abatements are handled effectively and in most cases the costs can be covered by AVA funds. The revenues from the State's AVA Program, generated by fees from registered vehicles in TC, pay for the TC AVA expenses (See "Budget Study" section below) without any General Fund money. If all AVs were reported in a timely manner and abated in this way, the backlog of "eyesore" PVNs (left longer than 10 days, often inoperable, and subject to vandalism, etc.) would not become such an issue. Unfortunately, PVNs in remote areas go unreported or, in the case of RVs, are too costly to be abated quickly.

In TC, there are two towing companies that assist the AVA Program. They assist with towing and dismantling autos, but neither has the capability to dismantle RVs. They can only assist by towing RVs to other counties with RV dismantling businesses.

Private Abatement

The TC AVA Program can also assist with AVs on private property (see AVA Flow Chart above). When a resident has an AV on their property, the Abatement Officer can assist them with the paperwork and advise them of their options. This is the major portion of vehicle abatements done each year.

There is at least one Facebook-based service that specializes in assisting private property owners (with the help of the Abatement Officer) to remove AVs on their own property. This service is often able to pay the owner the remaining part of the scrap value of the vehicle once it has deducted its fee. This valuable service works together with the AVA Program to help provide an incentive to landowners to abate their own vehicles. Otherwise, landowners may choose to relocate their inoperable vehicles onto County roads or State highways so that they become the AVA Program's responsibility to deal with.

RV Abatement

RVs contain more hazardous wastes and provide additional challenges to the AVA Program. There are no longer any businesses in TC that handle RV dismantling. The TC Solid Waste

Department does not have the infrastructure, staff, or budget to handle the dismantling and removal of these materials. For this reason, RVs are hauled to counties (Shasta or Humboldt) with businesses available to dismantle and dispose of hazardous materials. The toxic materials in RVs that would need proper disposal include but are not limited to:

- toxic wastes found in all vehicles (see list above in the “Timely Abatement” section)
- asbestos (older RVs may contain this in vapor shields, seam caulking, flooring, and other building materials)
- drug waste (needles, drug paraphernalia, etc.)
- hazardous waste containers filled with toxic chemicals



In addition, these are also generally filled with trash, which will add even more to the cost of abatement.



When the budget allows, local towing companies assist with removing RVs to dismantling businesses in neighboring counties. It is notable that the most recent such tow this past summer cost the AVA Program \$3700 (see more information in the “Budget Study” section for a recent RV abatement on 6/9/22).



Eyesore Abatement

By far the biggest AVA issue has been the burned out, stripped down, trash-filled, graffiti-laden PNVs that have accumulated in remote sections of the County. The size of TC and its miles of roadways, combined with limited law enforcement presence, creates an opportunity for this type of PNV to become a huge problem. The cost to registered owners to scrap non-functioning vehicles is high and little information is available to the public about how to do so legally. In addition, the high volume of transient traffic through the many miles of County roads makes it possible to abandon a vehicle without being observed.

The logistics of towing from remote TC areas is prohibitive. Several factors make the abatements of PNVs located in southern and eastern TC nearly impossible for the current program:

- the abatement involves several hours of driving and multiple trips before towing occurs
- the road conditions in remote areas put excessive wear and tear on County or private tow vehicles
- the condition of the vehicle e.g., no tires, structural integrity, etc. can damage the tow vehicle
- the presence of trash or toxic wastes further complicates the abatement and increases the cost to the AVA program



General Services cites these factors as a strain on the AVA budget and the limited hours of the Abatement Officer. These limiting factors are the cause of the backlog of PNVs in these hard-to-reach areas and there is nothing in place at present to address all of these in a timely manner. Without additional staffing and financial resources, these abandoned cars and RVs will continue to build up.

Budget Study

General Services provided the Jury with copies of “CA State Controller's Office AVA Reports” (summarized in Table 1), as well as budget and expenses reports “Abatement Income & Expenses Report” and “Abatement Expenditures & Revenues Ledger” (summarized in Table 2). Information on Fiscal Year (FY) 2017/18 through 2021/22 was requested except in the case of the “Abatement Expenditures & Revenues Ledger,” which was requested only for FY 2019/20 through 2021/22 to clarify specific categories of expenses for more detailed information on what areas AVA revenues have covered in the past three FYs.

Every year the AVA Program is required to submit a CA State Controller's Office AVA Report to the State Controller to summarize how the revenues have been spent. This data is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Fiscal Year	Revenues Received	Total Expenditures	Total # Vehicles Abated	Average Cost/ Abatement	Unexpended Fee Revenues	# of Notices to Abate	# of Vehicles Disposed	Total Cost for Towing/ Storage
2017/18	\$16,636.74	\$20,072.43	504	\$39.83	\$3,435.69	48	513	\$1,769.25
2018/19	\$16,693.11	\$21,314.74	418	\$50.99	\$4,621.63	39	429	\$4,398.75
2019/20	\$15,864.66	\$20,601.41	291	\$70.80	-\$4736.75	21	296	\$3,988.75
2020/21	\$16,917.92	\$19,989.86	291	\$68.69	-\$3,071.94	35	291	\$3,650.00
2021/22	\$16,097.53	\$16,734.85	193	\$86.71	-\$637.32	22	193	\$4,968.75

Briefly, the explanation of each column is as follows:

- Fiscal Year – the time period the data covers
- Revenues Received – money from the State’s Abandoned Vehicle Trust Fund collected from annual fees on registered vehicles
- Total Expenditures – the total cost of the AVA Program calculated with salaries, service and supply, and indirect costs billed to the department added together (see Table 2 for details)
- Total Number of Vehicles Abated – the number of vehicles the Abatement Officer issued abatement slips to and are to be disposed. This includes AVs on County roads and highways AND private property
- Average Cost per Abatement – the Total Expenditures divided by the Number of Vehicles Abated
- Unexpended Fee Revenues – the annual amount of revenue provided by the State that has either not been expended (positive values), OR additional funds were needed to cover the expenditures of the AVA Program (the negative number values, like in FYs 19/20, 20/21 and 21/22). The years that all revenues were not utilized, a small cash reserve accumulates and is available for some of the overspending that occurs in other years. The CHP Handbook covers the allowable amounts carried over to be utilized in the next FY.

- Number of Notices to Abate – the number of illegally dumped or abandoned vehicles that receive a notice to abate on County roads or highways ONLY
- Number of Vehicles Disposed Of – this includes BOTH private property and public road abatement slips provided by the Abatement Officer and are abated
- Total Costs of Towing/Storage - the AVA funds spent on towing or storage of abated vehicles (those abandoned on County roads or highways ONLY)

In Table 2, a summary of the “Abatement Expenditures & Revenues Ledger” shows the categories of expenditures for the AVA Program. The “Other” costs, too numerous to list separately, are combined into one category, as these expenses combined are lower than the expenses marked with an asterisk (*), the highest cost to the AVA Program.

Table 2

Expenditures	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22
Regular Salary*	\$5,617.35	\$5,707.02	\$3,102.20
Group Insurance Retirees*	\$3,421.84	\$3,947.56	\$3,258.48
Other	\$1,495.67	\$475.36	\$2,944.21
<i>Total Salaries & Benefits</i>	\$10,534.86	\$10,129.94	\$9,304.89
Professional & Special Services (towing)*	\$3,988.75	\$3,650.00	\$4,968.75
Other	\$2,625.57	\$789.07	\$496.85
<i>Total Services & Supplies</i>	\$6,614.32	\$4,439.07	\$5,465.60
Indirect Cost County Dept*	\$2,858.70	\$5,251.00	\$1,800.00
Other	\$593.53	\$169.85	\$164.36
<i>Total Interfund Expenses</i>	\$3,452.23	\$5,420.85	\$1,964.36
TOTAL Expenditures	\$20,747.71	\$19,989.86	\$16,734.85
State Vehicle Abatement Revenues	\$15,864.66	\$16,917.92	16,097.53

* Indicates the highest expense(s) in each category

The budget for the AVA Program works like any other County department, with Salary and Benefit Costs, Services and Supplies Costs, and Interfund Costs for administrative services. These costs will vary year to year but are the “cost of doing business” for any County department. The only “discretion” that the AVA Program has is in the expenditures it makes for towing and storage of vehicles (under “Services and Supplies Costs”). This budget line must be adapted each year to compensate for disparity between expected expenses and any available cash reserves from previous years. If there is a cash reserve and normal expenses, then the next year’s towing budget can be larger. However, the opposite is usually the case, as the last three FYs have shown, with “Unexpended Revenues” in the negative.

The **State Vehicle Abatement Revenues** have yet to cover the **TOTAL Expenditures** of the AVA Program in TC. The annual revenue for AVA has varied depending on TC population and the number of registered vehicles (See Table 1), and total expenditures in the budget have been adjusted every year to reflect these changes in revenues. Strict budgeting and readjustments keep the AVA Program functioning year to year, and the cash reserves from prior years help bridge the gap when expenses go up. However, there is always the challenge of making this tight budget cover all the expense of towing AVs, especially RVs, in the remote areas of the County. In most cases, the costliest AVs must wait. Most notably, in June of 2022, for one RV the cost was \$3700.00 to be towed to a Humboldt County RV dismantler. This one tow completely wiped out the budget for other AVs that FY.

Other Considerations

In order for the AVA Program to completely abate all AVs, more funding is needed. This needed funding would require BOS action beyond what it is currently required to do. The only involvement of the BOS in the AVA Program's history has been:

- to create (by a vote of the board) the "Service Authority" with the State initially in 1994
- to extend the AVA Program (by resolution, see Appendix C) every 10 years
- to approve budget adjustments as needed
- to approve and/or renew contracts with local towing or dismantling companies

For example, BOS approval is needed for budget adjustments to reallocate funds from the cash reserves (see Budget Study above) of "unexpended revenue" in previous FYs to cover shortfalls in the current FY. Other than these routine actions, no other BOS oversight is required under the current program structure. A BOS action would be required to change the AVA Service Authority from General Services to another department, or to revise how that Service Authority is structured. Additional funding that is needed for the AVA Program from the General Fund or potential grants would also require BOS action.

In other counties, the Clean California Grant is being used to support AVA "Amnesty" programs to assist with the costs of removing these PNVs. Like similar amnesty days in which the TC Solid Waste Department provides opportunities for turning in toxic wastes or e-wastes on specific days each year, the amnesty programs in other counties provide funds to offset the costs for residents to legally abate their broken-down RVs or vehicles.

While grants are a means of supplementing AVA programs in this way, TC's grant writer is currently funded by only one department. It is limited to finding, writing and managing grants for that department alone. For any other departments to obtain grants, that department would have to set aside money from its regular budget to fund the grant writer to seek out new grants and maintain those grants. Under this current financial structure, it is difficult for any department to take away from its already tight budget to finance grant writing. Therefore, it is not feasible for the AVA Program to take advantage of the Clean California grant opportunity. There would need to be a BOS action to reallocate funding to any department to allow for grant writing to be included in their budgets.

In other counties (Butte and Lake), the Service Authority created for their AVA Programs functions like a special district with a governing board made up of members of each town/city in the County. Their boards meet regularly throughout the year and deal with the AVA issue in a “task force” mentality that brings a more coordinated, balanced view of the problem, involving community stakeholders.

While law enforcement may be the logical department for an AVA Program, other neighboring counties also have their AVA Program under departments other than law enforcement (i.e., General Services, Planning Department “Code Enforcement,” Community Development, etc.). Another option, employed by Del Norte County, is to support its Abatement Officer by using all available department staff (Sheriff Department, Code Enforcement, Department of Transportation, etc.) out in the field to locate AVs and tag them in their daily routine. The use of other County departments to do the actual tagging of AVs allows new AVs to be reported in a timelier manner. This coordinated “observe and report” policy between departments bridges the gap in reporting that leads to the backlog of unabated PNVs.

The scope of the problem in TC currently makes it impossible for a part time Abatement Officer to adequately address the problem without help from other departments. An AV reported on the Abatement Officer’s days off (4 out of 5 business days) goes without any attention for the rest of that week until the Abatement Officer’s next scheduled day. However, without a revision of the Service Authority and additional funding, other departments in TC would have to bill their time to the AVA Program under the current County financial structure.

FINDINGS

- F1. The AVA Program can complete “Private Abatements” efficiently with its existing resources and program structure, assisting residents with vehicles they wish to abate themselves.
- F2. The AVA Program is not able to complete all reports of AVs on roads and highways with its existing resources and program structure due to the limitations of its budget.
- F3. The current AVA Program is only able to respond to reports and cannot locate AVs daily to prevent the buildup of the PNVs.
- F4. Due to the AVA Program’s self-funding capability without using General Funds, there is currently no routine annual evaluation of the AVA Program by the BOS or “oversight” by any board or community stakeholders.
- F5. In the past five fiscal years, the AVA Program’s revenues from the State DMV fees have been insufficient to cover all the AVA Program expenses.

- F6. The Clean California grant is available to supplement the AVA Program, but TC has no funding for the request and administration of this grant opportunity.
- F7. Over time, the cost to abate an AV increases and the scrap value decreases, leading to a PNV that is left in place for lack of funds.
- F8. There is a lack of information available in the media (newspaper, social media) or on the County website for TC residents to report an AV or legally abate an AV on their property.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The BOS should revisit the financial and personnel structure of the AVA Service Authority in TC to include other departments to assist in locating and tagging AVs to assist the Abatement Officer by October 1, 2023 (F3).
- R2. The BOS should examine the AVA Programs in Butte and Lake Counties to consider a future revision of the AVA Service Authority to include an “AVA Board” made up of community stakeholders by October 1, 2023 (F4).
- R3. The BOS should do a cost/benefit analysis of using additional General Funds to pay for grant writing for other departments, specifically General Services and Solid Waste by October 1, 2023 (F2, F5, F6, F7).
- R4. The BOS should do a cost/benefit analysis of a Public Relations Campaign (press release, social media posts, ad campaign) to highlight Private Abatement options for TC residents and how to report an AV on public roadways by October 1, 2023 (F8).
- R5. The BOS should instruct the Information Technology and General Services departments to update the County website to include a downloadable “Report an Abandoned Vehicle” form, an “I Want To...” menu option to assist the public in navigating to the AVA Program page, a set of FAQs, a list of businesses to assist with private abatements, and all relevant program information by October 1, 2023 (F8).

COMMENDATION

- C1. The General Services staff and its AVA Program should be commended by the BOS for their effective use of limited resources and their ability to adapt to lack of staff (F1, F2).

REQUIRED RESPONSES

*Require responses from local governing boards or elected county officials (per PC 933).
Include response time.*

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following within 90 days:

- Trinity County Board of Supervisors (F4, F6, F8, R1 through R5)

Penal Code (PC) §933.05 sets requirements for responses:

- Responses are to be received in a timely manner. Elected officials must respond within 60 days of the report's publication date, Boards within 90 days. Boards are given 90 days to meet Brown Act requirements.
- Responses to findings will be agrees, partially disagrees, or disagrees. Any disagreement with a finding will include the text of the finding and an explanation for the disagreement.
- Responses to recommendations are:
 - Already implemented (provide evidence)
 - Will implement in the future with a stated time frame
 - Requires further analysis with an explanation, scope, parameters, and time frame not to exceed six months
 - Will not implement because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, along with an explanation of why

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Trinity County Abatement Officer Job Posting (Page 1)



TRINITY, COUNTY OF CA
invites applications for the position of:

Vehicle Abatement Officer, Part Time

SALARY:	\$15.80 - \$19.21 Hourly
DEPARTMENT:	Administration
DIVISION:	General Services
OPENING DATE:	01/10/22
CLOSING DATE:	Continuous
DEFINITION:	

Under general direction, to performs investigations and enforce vehicle abatement laws and regulations; and to do related work as required.

EXAMPLES OF IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL DUTIES:

(The following is used as a partial description and is not restrictive as to duties required.)

Plans, organizes, and carries out investigations for the enforcement of Vehicle Abatement codes, laws, and regulations; receives public complaints, completes code violation report forms and takes appropriate follow-up action; determines the nature and extent of code violations and works with vehicle to resolve problems and obtain compliance; conducts investigations to confirm or deny violations; assists with operation the County Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program; responds to requests for abandoned or inoperable vehicle actions and makes investigations of abandoned and/or inoperable vehicles; analyzes information and takes appropriate action to resolve problems; verifies vehicle ownership, making proper notifications and arranging for towing and removal of vehicles; prepares correspondence related to investigations and compliance; performs follow-up inspections to ensure that compliance has been achieved; prepares written reports to be reviewed by appropriate County management and legal staff for civil or criminal charges; issues citations to violators; prepares affidavit and inspection warrants; provides support for legal staff during formal procedures; may testify in Court; prepares a variety of reports and records; operates office equipment and computers; coordinates investigations with other County departments.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

Knowledge of:

Vehicle abatement laws, rules, and regulations. Legal terminology, forms, and procedures. Investigation techniques and procedures. Principles of identification, preservation, and presentation of evidence.

Ability to:

Trinity County Abatement Officer Job Posting (Page 2)

Conduct investigations and enforcement actions for Vehicle Abatement laws, codes, ordinances, and regulations.

Analyze a variety of information and determine appropriate resolutions to problems and/or enforcement actions.

Analyze and interpret laws and regulations related to Vehicle Abatement. Gather, organize, analyze, and present a variety of data and information. Prepare and present evidence in court.

Prepare, clear, concise and accurate records and reports. Effectively represent the County Vehicle Abatement Program and enforcement functions with the courts, the public, and other government agencies. Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships.

Training and Experience:

Any combination of training and experience which would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required knowledge and abilities would be:

Two years of experience in investigations and code enforcement work.

Special Requirements:

Possession of, or ability to obtain, an appropriate valid California Driver's License.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

TYPICAL PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Sit for extended periods; frequently stand and walk; ability to walk in uneven and slippery terrain; normal manual dexterity and eye-hand coordination; corrected hearing and vision to normal range; verbal communication; use of office equipment including computers, telephones, calculators, copiers, and FAX.

TYPICAL WORKING CONDITIONS

Work is performed in an office, courtroom, and outdoor environments; some exposure to changes in temperature and weather; some exposure to grease, oils, and unusual noise; continuous contact with staff and the public.

Salary Information:

Vehicle Abatement Officer

\$15.80 - \$19.21 / Hour

APPLICATIONS MAY BE FILED ONLINE AT:
<https://www.trinitycounty.org/>

Position #202100012
VEHICLE ABATEMENT OFFICER, PART TIME
LM

11 Court St
Weaverville, CA 96093
5306231325

personnel@trinitycounty.org

APPENDIX B

DMV Abatement Form



PUBLIC AGENCY AUTHORIZATION TO DISPOSE OF A VEHICLE VALUED AT \$500 OR LESS TO A SCRAP IRON PROCESSOR OR DISMANTLER

☐ C.V.C. 22851.2 ☐ C.V.C. 22851.3

PRINT ALL INFORMATION EXCEPT SIGNATURES

A. TO BE COMPLETED BY PUBLIC AGENCY (Items 1-12)

1. LIC. PLATE NUMBER DISPLAYED ON VEHICLE		2. ISSUED BY STATE OF	
3. YEAR MODEL		MAKE	BODY TYPE
4. VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NO. (VIN)			<input type="checkbox"/> The vehicle is in such condition that the VIN is not available
5. ENGINE IDENTIFICATION NO. (EIN) (MOTORCYCLES ONLY)			<input type="checkbox"/> The vehicle is in such condition that the EIN is not available

NOTE: THIS VEHICLE MAY ONLY BE DISPOSED OF TO A LICENSED DISMANTLER OR SCRAP IRON PROCESSOR.

AUTHORIZED TO DISPOSE OF VEHICLE

6. AGENCIES ESTIMATED VALUE OF VEHICLE		
7. PUBLIC AGENCY NAME		DATE TOWED
8. ADDRESS		CITY
9. OFFICER'S NAME/AUTHORIZED PUBLIC AGENCY EMPLOYEE TITLE a. <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement b. <input type="checkbox"/> Authorized Public Agency	RANK/TITLE	BADGE/SERIAL NO. (Officer Only)
10. <input type="checkbox"/> At least 72 hours before removal, a distinctive notice was attached to this vehicle stating it would be removed by a public agency. <input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned vehicle removed per CVC 22669(d). <input type="checkbox"/> Immediately after removal, the public agency notified the Stolen Vehicle System of the Department of Justice in Sacramento of the removal. <input type="checkbox"/> Notification was mailed to all interested parties. _____		

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

11. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER/PUBLIC AGENCY EMPLOYEE AUTHORIZING DISPOSAL OF VEHICLE	DATE AUTHORIZED
12. NAME OF AUTHORIZED TOWING COMPANY	

B. TO BE COMPLETED BY TOWING AGENT (Items 13-16)

13. SIGNATURE OF TOWING AGENT ON LINE 16 RELEASES INTEREST IN VEHICLE TO DISMANTLER OR SCRAP IRON PROCESSOR BELOW. <input type="checkbox"/> Notification was mailed to all interested parties. _____	
14. DISMANTLER OR SCRAP IRON PROCESSOR FIRM NAME	DISMANTLER NO.
15. ADDRESS	CITY

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

16. SIGNATURE OF TOWING AGENT	DATE
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C. DISTRIBUTION OF COPIES BY THE FOLLOWING

Public Agency: Retain YELLOW copy for your records. Give WHITE and PINK copies to firm or person to whom vehicle given.
Towing Agency: Give WHITE and PINK copies to the dismantler or the scrap iron processor.
Dismantler: Attach WHITE copy to completed Report of Vehicles to be Dismantled (Reg 42) and mail to:
 Department of Motor Vehicles, P. O. Box 94242, Sacramento, CA 94244-2920
 Retain PINK copy for your dismantler records.
Scrap Iron Processor: Retain PINK and WHITE copies for your records.

REG 462 (REV. 11/2007)

APPENDIX C

Letter of Intent to DMV/Resolution Extending Vehicle Abatement Fee Page 1



TRINITY COUNTY

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS DIVISION
P.O. Box 2700
Weaverville, California 96093
Ph: 530.623.1319 / Fax: 530.623.5015

July 29, 2021

Department of Motor Vehicles
Registration Operations Division
ATTN: Al Tolentino
2415 1st Ave. M/S D148
Sacramento, Ca. 95818-2606

RE: Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Fee Program

Dear Mr. Tolentino,

Enclosed is a certified copy of Resolution number 2021-049 adopted by the Trinity County Board of Supervisors on May 4th, 2021. This resolution extends the sunset date of the Trinity County Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program to April 30th, 2032 and formally request the extension and authorization for the collection of the registration fee(s) as set out in the California Vehicle Code 9250.7(g)

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Webster", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Michael Webster
Trinity County Buildings & Grounds
Facilities Operations Superintendent

cc: Richard Kuhns, Psy.D
County Administrative Officer
County of Trinity
(530) 623-1382

☐ Facilities Maintenance
Division

☐ Facilities Rental Division
☐ County Cemeteries Division

☐ Motor Pool Division
☐ Vehicle Abatement Division

☐ Parks & Grounds Division

Letter of Intent to DMV/Resolution Extending Vehicle Abatement Fee Page 2

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-049

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF TRINITY EXTENDING THE VEHICLE ABATEMENT REGISTRATION FEE PURSUANT TO VEHICLE CODE 9250.7(G)

WHEREAS, Vehicle Code 9250.7 allows a service authority to impose a service fee on all vehicles registered to an owner with an address in the county that established the service authority; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 111-93 provides for the establishment of a service authority for the abatement of abandoned vehicles and the imposition of the fee pursuant to Vehicle Code 9250.7; and

WHEREAS, the service fee sunsets after 10 years unless extended by the Board of Supervisors by two-third vote; and

WHEREAS, Resolutions 2008-098 and 2011-065 extended the service fee for 10-year periods and the current period is set to sunset April 30, 2022; and

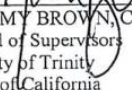
WHEREAS, the County of Trinity desires to extend the authorization of the services fee for an additional 10 year; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Motor Vehicles is requesting a new resolution extending the fee no later than August 1, 2021.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Trinity extends the sunset date of the Trinity County Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program to April 30, 2032, and authorizes the collection of the registration fees as set out in Vehicle Code 9250.7 through April 30, 2032.

DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED this 4th day of May, 2021 by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Trinity by motion, second (Groves/Frasier), and the following vote:

AYES:	Supervisors Frasier, Groves, Cox, Gogan, and Brown
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
RECUSE:	None


JEREMY BROWN, CHAIRMAN
Board of Supervisors
County of Trinity
State of California

ATTEST:

RICHARD KUHNS, Psy.D
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: 
Deputy