NEWS

From Chairman Gary Ovitt

Fourth District, San Bernardino County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 6, 2009

For information, contact
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STATEMENT FROM SUPERVISOR GARY OVITT

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is in receipt of a letter from the Assessor dated February 6, 2009 announcing his intention to vacate his office on February 13, 2009.

I will continue to closely monitor the operations of the Assessor's office until a new Assessor is appointed. The removal process initiated by the Board of Supervisors will continue until the position of Assessor becomes vacant. At that point I will consult with special counsel and determine which course of action the process should take.

Because the removal process is still under way, and because the Board of Supervisors acts as a quasi-judicial body in that process, the Board cannot hold any bias, which would include expressing opinions on the resignation announcement.

I commend my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors for their consistent efforts to do everything within the Board's power to hold the Assessor accountable. I also wish Bill Postmus the best in his future endeavors and truly hope he overcomes his problems.

In accordance with the state's open meeting laws, I will not comment on what course of action the Board might pursue to address a vacancy in the Assessor's Office, as the law mandates that any such discussion occur in a properly noticed public meeting. I will bring an item before the Board at the appropriate time to receive a report from County Counsel on the Board's options under the County Charter and receive input from the Board on how to proceed.

In the meantime, I have the utmost confidence in Assistant Assessor Dennis Draeger's ability to manage the department.

OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR

172 West Third Street • San Bernardino, CA 92415-0310
www.sbcounty.gov/assessor

County of San Bernardino

BILL POSTMUS
Assessor

February 6, 2009

The Honorable Chairman Gary Ovitt
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0110

Dear Supervisor Ovitt:

It is with tremendous sadness that I submit this letter which announces my resignation from the Office of San Bernardino County Assessor.

My resignation from the Office of Assessor will take effect Friday, February 13, 2009, at noon. The window between the date of this letter and the effective date of my resignation is to ensure a seamless transition to whomever the honorable members of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors chooses as my successor. I sincerely wish my replacement well.

I am leaving my position as County Assessor to focus on restoring my personal health. As news reports suggest, I am struggling to overcome a battle with substance abuse. I cannot say how overwhelmed I am at the outpouring of support I received from family, friends and strangers from around the world. Thanks to their continued support and guidance, and with God's help, I know I'll conquer this terrible affliction.

It is my hope that my successor in this office will have a background in government finance and is NOT a career political professional. While I am proud of many accomplishments during my tenure as Assessor, it is obvious that politics and political activity should not be a concern to the individual serving in this position. For the benefit of San Bernardino County, the Board of Supervisors should give the highest consideration towards appointing a steward of the public trust with expertise in the field of fiscal policy, preferably an individual with proven experience in the property tax assessment process. As we have learned, political considerations should not be a priority for any county assessor.

As I prepare to leave this position, I reflect on my accomplishments in this office, as there actually were several. I am singularly proudest of my implementation of tax reductions to local homeowners that saved taxpayers nearly $70 million.

I would like to thank the voters of San Bernardino County, and particularly the residents of the First Supervisorial District, for their support in three elections.

Also, I would like to apologize to those I have let down. Failing you and failing myself was never the objective of my career. For that, I am truly sorry and I ask your forgiveness.

To my political opponents and anyone I have ever offended in the course of my political career, this day must be so sweet. I understand. Please know I wish my opponents no ill will. It is my sincerest hope that San Bernardino County can move forward in a positive direction.

I leave office with a sense of pride in my accomplishments, but a deep sense of regret for my personal failings. Again, I offer my deepest apologies.

In closing, as I finish the chapter on a career in government service that began 16 years ago, I thank the voters for their trust and I sincerely ask forgiveness for my shortcomings.

May God bless San Bernardino County.

Sincerely,

BILL POSTMUS, Assessor
San Bernardino County