

# NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino

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## **Statement by Board of Supervisors Chairman Gary C. Ovitt regarding the investigation and arrest of the Assessor**

Today's arrest of Assessor Bill Postmus is disturbing in light of his impassioned statement in public session on January 6 that he had overcome a substance abuse problem. Today's arrest makes that statement suspect.

The criminal justice system and the Board of Supervisors each has a process that must be followed to determine the facts. If the allegations are true, the Assessor's behavior is intolerable. The County is awaiting updates from the District Attorney and will ascertain the facts and act in the public's interest. It is clear that the circumstances surrounding the Assessor are changing from day to day, and the Board will respond appropriately to information as it becomes available.

During its next meeting on January 27, the Board will determine whether to move forward with its own investigation and the process of removing the Assessor from office. For that reason, Board members are limited in what they can say about the Assessor and the ongoing developments in this case.

Regarding today's searches, it would be wrong to assume that anyone or any office subjected to a search is the target of an investigation. Search warrants are tools used by investigators to ensure they receive all pertinent information in connection with an investigation.

This is a sad and embarrassing day for the county, but the Board of Supervisors is confident in the District Attorney's ability to investigate the issues involving the Assessor and bring the situation to a proper conclusion.

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For the past several months, the Board of Supervisors has been demanding answers and accountability from the Assessor, instituting reforms in his office, and taking the initial steps toward a Board investigation of the Assessor and possibly his removal from office.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Gary C. Ovitt plans to personally keep very close tabs on the operations of the Assessor's Office and maintain daily contact with Assistant Assessor Dennis Draeger to assure that the office continues to perform its vital duties without interruption. The County has the utmost confidence in Mr. Draeger's ability to lead and operate the Assessor's office in the Assessor's absence.