

Not enough damaging evidence to charge EDSO deputies

By Kathryn Reed

Coming just weeks after a scathing grand jury report, El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson outlines egregious behavior by the sheriff's department in regards to giving incentive pay to employees who had phony degrees.

"None of the universities involved in this investigation were appropriately accredited," the report states.

The 22-page report was released July 7.



Vern Pierson

Because criminal activity could not be proved beyond a reasonable doubt, not charges are being filed against the five employees in question. None of those people work in the Lake Tahoe substation. But their names have not been released and are not in the report.

"... the conduct and actions of these officers is extremely troubling and we believe it is necessary to change the incentive pay process," the report says.

The report has testimony from former Sheriff Jeff Neves and others who say the incentive pay documents were not scrutinized or verified for validity.

The report says, "The former Sheriff suggested that he and his administration were too busy to fulfill their oversight obligation to the county in so much as PPF forms were concerned. Retired Sheriff Neves testified that because they received so many PPF forms for review and signature, they adopted an unwritten policy of simply signing the forms and submitting them to county payroll without even attempting the most cursory or surface review of the forms and their content."

The report indicates Neves may have turned a blind eye to the truth when confronted with it.

It was Fred Kollar, who was undersheriff to Neves and filled out Neves term after he retired, who brought the case to the DA's office.