

Opinion: Report IDs true bully in EDC

By Larry Weitzman

El Dorado County's recently ousted Chief Administrative Officer Terri Daly may still be menacing the county.

It wasn't just enough that she, 1) hired the Assistant CAO Kim Kerr, who demonstrated her incompetence by violating the California Public Contract Law at least 36 times, and 2) created a deficit of more than \$100 million during the the next four and a half years because of her hiring of 170 mostly unnecessary employees and awarding a 15 percent raise while squandering a \$54 million General Fund surplus by the end of 2015. Rumor has it that she is still complaining to the current Grand Jury about something and if it's about a climate of fear within the county, she has no credibility. Daly was the ringleader of the "climate of fear."



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About a year ago Daly created a campaign against certain elected officials, especially the auditor, and that because of him the working environment for EDC employees had become a "climate of fear." Daly's campaigned with the prior Grand Jury to damage the auditor's re-election by claiming he was a bully and trying to get the El Dorado County Charter changed (during the Charter Review Committee's existence and now disbanded for another five years) to eliminate elected officials, such as

the auditor and tax collector/treasurer and make them all appointed (by Daly as CAO).

I obtained from the county counsel the almost complete 931-page Van Dermyden Maddux Climate Assessment survey in which Daly attempted to use as evidence of the auditor's bullying.

But something was wrong with Daly's claims and conclusion. The summary of the Van Dermyden survey said the auditor had a 92 percent employee satisfaction rating, while the county average was 60 percent. The auditor had the highest satisfaction score of all departments with more than eight employees.

While the Van Dermyden summary said there was retaliation and bullying within EDC, the survey summary wasn't specific as to who was to blame. But that didn't stop Daly from claiming it was the auditor. Daly lied. In fact, if you read the 931-page report, you will learn the problem was anything but the auditor. It was Daly.

While not reported in the summary, there were four departments that received satisfaction scores of 100 percent, Air Quality (8 respondents), Risk Management (3 respondents), Clerk of the Board (1 respondent) and Elections (3 respondents). On the flip side, even the Board of Supervisors staff had low marks with only 33 percent of the reporting employees saying they were very satisfied or satisfied with their employment with EDC.

So, you have a complete understanding of the survey results, 55 percent of BOS employees said they were neutral and 11 percent say they were very dissatisfied.

Is there a "climate of fear" in El Dorado County and if so where was it prevalent? No matter what the Van Dermyden says about El Dorado County, we will never be able to judge the results completely because we have no baseline. And Van Dermyden refused to release any data from other jurisdictions with which to compare.

However, in examining the Van Dermyden study, it points to three departments, the CAO's office, Kerr's Community Development Agency and the Information Technology Department which was run by a Daly minion which had a dissatisfaction rating two and a half times the county average (41 percent). That's right, the "climate of fear" had nothing to do with the auditor, it had everything to do with the CAO and her handpicked ACAO Kim Kerr.

Starting with the CAO's office, question seven of the study asked: "If an incident occurs in your department, do you feel comfortable reporting?" Title and names were redacted, but you can take a guess. There were 11 responses with one saying "our TITLE, NAME" the another comment was "relationship between the TITLE, TITLE and TITLE." I'll bet I can name two of the redacted parties. Two more of the 11 comments said "get thrown under the bus" and another was "no one acts on it."

These are just a few of the remarks for question seven from the CAO's section of the study. However, question 12 tells us another story about the county's problems, the hiring of 170 county employees, most of whom were unnecessary.

Q12 asked: "What concerns do you have about the workplace?" One employee in the CAO's office put it this way, "We do all the difficult work for the county and make the least amount of money in our department. Also there are redundant positions that duplicate what we do ... and they get more money..."

It was Daly who went on a hiring spree for her department, adding 18 new analysts, administrators and fiscal techs in the last two years at a cost of almost \$2 million annually. Daly left EDC facing a five-year deficit of ore than \$100 million.

Overall, within that two-year period she hired or allowed to be hired an additional 150 employees. That is what happens when at least three blind mice are on the Board of Supervisors.

If Daly were such a wonderful person, you would think her overall satisfaction rating for the CAO's office would have been off the chart. It wasn't. It was about average for the county with a satisfied rating of 62 percent, 19 percent neutral and 19 percent dissatisfied. The overall county averages were 60 percent average, 23 percent neutral and 17 percent dissatisfied.

But when we get to the Community Development Agency which the ACAO, Kim Kerr, ran it makes the CAO's employees remarks to question seven look like child's play. Overall the CDA had a 56/22 percent satisfied/dissatisfied rating from 156 respondents. But it is the responses to Q7 that are so telling. Half of the 42 responses used the word retaliation, bullying, belittling, reprisal, repercussion, and in some cases words to that effect. Many used a combination of the words. It just supports the fact that if there is a bully in El Dorado County, it lived in the CDA.

Fifty-six percent of the respondents in the CDA said the reason for leaving EDC employment would be the "challenges with culture or climate of department."

Next and hardly last in the EDC misery index is Information Technologies. Another handpicked Daly loyalist, Kelly Webb, who was recently dismissed from the job as department head, ran this department. Webb never met the minimum job qualification requirements, but small things like that never bothered Daly. IT had 29 respondents and not only did it have the highest score for dissatisfaction at 41 percent, it had the lowest score for satisfaction at 27 percent.

As to Q7 there were 13 responses with retaliation used or described at least eight times. But that is only the half of it. Q12: "What concerns do you have about the workplace?" had some telling remarks. The first one said, "Mgmt is not qualified. TITLE (redacted) not following county policy..." A second more telling remark was: "The department is being

managed by people who are not technically qualified, but have been placed in management positions thru favoritism by the TITLE (redacted) and are now running the department into the ground." It is obvious that the redacted title belonged to the CAO.

Here is another IT respondent's statement: "The management in my department actively engages in discrimination, harassment and retaliation against employees and is condoned by the TITLES (redacted name)."

And the auditor is the bully? As you can see, the three departments directly involving Daly and her minions, Kerr and Webb are the worst in the county. And Daly as you can see is not only a liar, but knew her largest impediment in her attempted coup of the county was the auditor. Daly already had the BOS eating out of her hand. That is why she wanted him gone. The auditor was the only remaining watchdog and check on Daly. One of the main functions of the auditor is the county fiscal watchdog.

Writer's note: The report as received from the County counsel redacted in its entirety question 11 from the entire report from each department: "What would you consider your greatest workplace challenge or difficulties?" The comments were so voluminous that they took up five pages in the CAO section, 12 pages from the CDA section and three pages from IT section. Most of the other 34 questions took one page. I am sure they were devastating regarding Daly and Kerr and because of that they were impossible to redact. Also questions 34: "Is there anything that was not included in your responses that you would like to add with respect to workplace culture?" and Q35: "Please provide any general topic area you would like to discuss such as retaliation, harassment, equal employment opportunity issues, culture, workplace civility, etc." were fully redacted from all 931 pages as for the same reason, too many names made it impossible to redact. The county says it does not have those pages. You can bet Daly and Kerr were

liberally named. The entire 931 pages should be posted on the Internet. I hate to break bubbles, but the BOS has the ultimate responsibility.

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