

OFFICIALS DISAGREE WITH GRAND JURY



The Glenn County grand jury has made several claims of a conflict of interest but the county officials and the human resources director seem to disagree with the grand jury and its findings. The County Counsel, Huston Carlyle, wrote a letter for the Superior Court Judge, Donald Byrd, in which he clearly stated that he disagreed with any type of finding of a conflict of interest because of the two roles he has, one as a county counsel and one as an interim personnel director. In his letter, Carlyle said, "I find this to be somewhat troubling since the grand jury concluded, incorrectly, that a conflict of interest exists simply because one person is doing two jobs. ... I would hope in the future that if the Grand Jury intends to take someone to task, the targeted person is afforded the courtesy and due process of at least being interviewed." Carlyle believes that the grand jury could have simply stated that there was the potential ability that a conflict could occur in which he may need to hire someone outside of the counsel, which would cost more for the county. In his letter, he wrote, "There is no conflict simply by holding the two offices." He also made it clear that Glenn County has been able to save hundreds and thousands of dollars because they have not had to hire someone else to be the personnel director so in a way; he is helping the county to save money. He has also said that the Board of Supervisors gets to make the final decision when it comes down to the budget and the policy that is set. Carlyle also stated that he is using guidelines for the area. The Human Resources Agency Director, Scott Gruendl, also chose to write to the Judge about the investigation of the possibility that a conflict of interest was taking place. In his statement, Gruendl said, "There has been some misinterpretation of this report by the media and the public that the finding that a conflict of interest occurred was viewed negatively." He also said, "It is my perspective that the Grand Jury agreed with the Human Resource Agency that a conflict occurred and that policy concerning the matter was followed." The grand jury, however, has been specific about its findings, stating that a follow-up never took place concerning staff member and the policies that have been put in place. The investigation started after two employees were hired by the agency at some point last year. The employees that were hired were either related or friends with one or several executives.