



SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
 Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Fifth District
 889 Hahn Hall of Administration
 500 West Temple Street
 Los Angeles, CA 90012
<http://antonovich.co.la.ca.us>

Contact: Tony Bell, Communications Deputy
 Office: (213) 974-5555 Cell: (213) 215-6175
 E-mail: tbell@bos.co.la.ca.us

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For Immediate Release

COUNTY COMMITS ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL TO STAFF FRAUD HOTLINE

Los Angeles -- Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich announced that the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller has added three positions to its Special Investigations Unit (SIU) to handle fraud investigations.

In response to Supervisor Antonovich's March 9 request, three additional positions were transferred from other areas in the Auditor-Controller department to address the increase in the number of calls to the Fraud Hotline.

The Auditor-Controller reviews referrals or calls on the Fraud Hotline and when it is determined that a case has sufficient merit, they deem the case "open" for investigation. The department is projecting 700 open cases for calendar year 2004. During 2003, the SIU had 512 open cases, up from 355 in 2002.

Since its initiation in 1988 by Supervisor Antonovich, the hotline has detected more than \$12 million in fraud, with a projected range of \$2 to \$4 million for 2004. The hotline is operational 24 hours a day and suspected fraud can be reported anonymously. The toll-free number is (800) 544-8861.

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