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# *Press Release*

From: Jeanne Caughell, Court Executive Officer &  
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Date: For immediate release - January 19, 2011

Re: Court to Increase Pool of Potential Jurors -  
*New Program to Encourage Citizen Participation on  
Juries*

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The Superior Court of the State of California, County of Tuolumne, today announced a new program to increase the pool of potential jurors by contacting those residents who have failed to respond to their jury summons and encouraging them to fulfill their obligations as citizens.

Starting on \_\_\_\_\_, 2011, the court will send a postcard to citizens who failed to appear for jury service and instruct them to contact the court to schedule a new time to serve or face possible penalties.

*“The court’s goal is to ensure that jury service is shared by all eligible citizens of the county, as mandated by the state Legislature,” said Presiding Judge Eric L. Du Temple. “Trial by jury is a cherished and constitutional right and jury service is an obligation of citizenship. It is only fair that the obligation be shared by all citizens, not just those who faithfully answer the call to serve.”*

California has made jury service much easier in recent years with the one-day or one-trial program. Yet an estimated 20 percent of citizens statewide do not respond to their jury summons, making it difficult for the courts to provide enough jurors for all trials, and shifting the burden on those citizens who do report for jury service.

**In 2010, 50 - 60 percent of the citizens of Tuolumne County who were called in to serve failed to appear or respond to their jury summons.**

*“The more citizens who report for jury service, the fewer people will have to serve, the faster trials can proceed, the less frequently citizens will be called, and the better our system of justice will run,” Presiding Judge Eric L. Du Temple said.*

Experience has shown that many citizens simply do not understand how important their service is to the smooth functioning of the judicial system, and many who initially fail to appear ultimately make perfectly good jurors. Sometimes, certain citizens are not eligible to serve or have legal hardships and are routinely excused once they provide an explanation to the court.

Under the court’s program, citizens who fail to appear for jury service may be held in contempt of court, which is punishable by fine and/or incarceration. Or the court may impose reasonable monetary sanctions in lieu of a finding of contempt. At any point, a summoned juror can decide to serve as a potential juror.

*“The court’s aim is to have citizens serve as jurors, not to punish them,” said Presiding Judge Eric L. Du Temple.*

For further information, contact Presiding Judge Eric L. Du Temple, or Court Executive Officer & Jury Commissioner, Jeanne Caughell, at (209) 533-5650.

For information about California jury service, go to:  
[www.courtinfo.gov/jury/improvements.htm](http://www.courtinfo.gov/jury/improvements.htm)