

# NEWS RELEASE Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Cyber Threat Preparedness

### Phishing and Passwords and Ransomware, Oh My!

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY** – The Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury assessed our county and cities' level of preparedness for a cyber attack. Cyber attacks targeting computer information systems, personal digital devices, or smartphones increase every year with the largest number of attacks typically hitting California. Cyber criminals target all types of businesses and all sizes of government agencies including small cities that often have limited resources to invest in cybersecurity. As Santa Cruz County continues its plans to expand broadband access and to provide efficient digital services to its residents, adherence to cybersecurity measures and best practices is critical.

Santa Cruz County and the cities of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Scotts Valley, and Capitola understand the cyber threat environment and the potential consequences of a cyber attack. These government entities have implemented varying levels of security measures to mitigate such threats.

The Jury's overall recommendations encompass the following:

- The County and the four cities should write and implement Cybersecurity Plans and Incident Response Plans that detail frameworks for mitigating cyber attacks and details for responding to a cyber incident.
- Each of our cities should designate a city official as the lead for cybersecurity. Even when an information technology consulting firm supports the city, one government official should be responsible for cybersecurity.
- The County and cities would benefit from cyber threat information sharing across the county, enabling greater knowledge of potential threats and shared ideas for threat mitigation.

The report is available at: [https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2023\\_final/2023-3\\_Cyber\\_Report.pdf](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2023_final/2023-3_Cyber_Report.pdf)

For more information regarding the Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury, please visit our website at <http://www.scgrandjury.org>.

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