

# **PLACER COUNTY MAIN JAIL AND MINIMUM SECURITY JAIL INSPECTIONS**

## **Summary**

California Penal Code Section 919 requires the Grand Jury to inspect the Placer County Main and Minimum Security Jails to evaluate conditions and management of these facilities, to inquire about prisoners not indicted, and to review any changes implemented since the previous Grand Jury's inspections.

Overall, the citizens of Placer County can take great pride in the operations and management of the Jail facilities. The professionalism and dedication of the Commander and staff are outstanding. Morale appears to be very high considering the crowded working conditions. Additional administrative staff office space is needed.

The Commander and his staff are committed to lowering the recidivism rate of inmates. In addition they are committed to rehabilitation of inmates and providing custody services.

The Grand Jury received a complaint about the denial of medical marijuana to inmates. The Grand Jury will not issue a separate report on this subject. However, an investigation determined that, in compliance with California law, if an inmate needs marijuana for a medical condition and has a legal prescription from a physician, the jail medical staff will see that the inmate receives the medication in the form of capsulized marijuana. The Grand Jury has no recommendations on this issue.

The 1999-2000 Grand Jury inspected the jails in August 1999. The Main Jail facility consists of three medium-security dorms, two with a capacity of 92 inmates each, and one with a capacity of 44 inmates, and one maximum-security module with a capacity of 32 inmates. In addition there are dormitory housing units (with up to 92 inmates) of the direct-supervision type, with a custody officer stationed inside each of the dorms. Indirect supervision is also provided from a housing booth. The current capacity of the Main Jail is 352 inmates.

The minimum-security area is in close proximity to the Main Jail and consists of three housing units - two for males and one for females, with a combined capacity of 160 inmates. Total jail capacity is, therefore, 512 including beds located in the infirmary. Although the jail facilities can hold 512 inmates, Federal and State laws set occupancy limits which are lower than total capacity. Consequently, some arrestees are released early in order to keep the jail population below the mandated levels.

The cost of housing is charged to inmates, but only about one percent is actually recovered.

A pilot program using K-9 dogs in the housing units is currently underway to add another level of “supervision” and control.

In January 1999, the jail received a \$1 million Federal Violent Offender Grant to improve some of the dormitory housing units. Plans are in place to build one more medium-size housing unit.

Placer County has also received a four-year multimillion-dollar grant for the Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction Program (MIORC). This grant is designed to address the needs of mentally ill offenders. Program implementation will be July 2000.

The Main Jail garage and inmate intake areas are undergoing expansion to accommodate more police vehicles and larger transports (buses). Under construction are a new pre-booking area and a room for testing of arrestees suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Prior Grand Juries have identified areas warranting improvement or correction. This Grand Jury reviewed these areas of concern and was pleased to see that progress has been made. However, there is still a serious need to expand the jails to accommodate the growing inmate population. The Board of Supervisors, the Placer County Executive Officer, the Sheriff, the Director of Health and Human Services, the Placer County Adult System of Care, and the Facility Services Director are aware of these problems and are collaborating to address them. There continue to be discussions about a South Placer Jail facility. Even if approved and funded with the help of the communities of Roseville, Rocklin, Loomis, and Lincoln, it is still several years in the future.

The Grand Jury concludes this report with eight recommendations.

## **Discussion**

In August 1999, the Grand Jury inspected the Placer County Main Jail and the Minimum Security Jail, located in Auburn. For at least a decade, prior Grand Juries have identified certain areas as warranting improvement or correction. The 1999-2000 Grand Jury followed up on these areas during its inspections to note progress, if any. The Main Jail facility has three medium security dorms, one maximum-security module, and several dormitory housing units resulting in a total capacity of 352 inmates. The Minimum Security facility has a capacity of 160 inmates. The inspections revealed that there still exists a serious need to expand the Jail facilities to meet the County’s growing inmate population. The original facility was built for 108 inmates and with expansions now houses at least 460 per day. There are over 1,800 individuals on probation and over 500 in Community Corrections programs. People violating parole or conditions of participation in the Community Corrections programs are rarely returned to jail because of the lack of space.

Because there is no space to house additional inmates, there are at present over 600 felony warrants and 6,000 misdemeanor warrants that are not being served. Those misdemeanants who are taken into custody are processed and released. With increased bed space through additional housing units and perhaps a new South Placer facility, some of these warrants may be served.

The Grand Jury found that progress has been made and is continuing toward relieving the overcrowding and providing more space, most notably through new housing configurations, such as walls, dormitories, cells, and security areas.

Through the efforts of the Sheriff's Department, the Criminal Justice Policy Committee, and others, Placer County received a Violent Offender Grant. The Jail also received a portion of the Citizens Option for Public Safety (COPS) Supplemental Law Enforcement Fund established by State law in 1996-1997. Construction has been approved for a new housing unit, which will extend over what is now an unused and poorly designed outdoor recreation yard.

Main Jail inmates have too much idle time. Although the average time in custody is only 16 days, those facing longer sentences should participate in schooling, job and life skill training and development programs to every extent practical. To accomplish this, additional space must be found in the Main Jail facility.

There is no program space available in the Main Jail for female inmates to participate in drug and alcohol counseling, schooling, job and life skill training, etc., and other program space is woefully inadequate.

For several years, the unfinished space between the secure facility and the central kitchen has been considered for an inmate room (program/G.E.D./law library); classification cell (offices/interview/holding); briefing/training room; maintenance/storage room; staff dining; male and female lockers; and a staff workout room so that staff can maintain a proper level of fitness. Very little has been done, however, and this potentially valuable space continues to be wasted.

The California Board of Corrections recently awarded Placer County a four-year multi-million dollar grant for the Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction Program (MIOCR). With these funds, an additional unit at the Jail can be developed to house inmates having significant mental illnesses. The grant will also provide funding for the development of a new residential treatment program (like a half-way house) where eligible inmates can receive substance abuse treatment, along with education and training in life and job skills. The proposed implementation date for this new program is July 2000. A team comprised of staff from offices of the District Attorney, Public Defender, Sheriff, Probation, and Mental Health Services will evaluate and classify all persons for serious mental illness who are booked in the Placer County Jail.

The moving of mentally ill offenders to a separate unit will enable Placer County to incarcerate up to 96 more arrestees instead of releasing them early or without serving any jail time at all.

South Placer County continues to grow rapidly. By 2010, 70% of Placer's population will reside in the southern portion of the County. The current Main and Minimum Jails cannot expand to meet this growing population. Placer County is investigating the possibility of a facility in South Placer to help address some of these issues. However, as has been noted previously, the economic reality of this facility is not in the immediate future. Assistance and funding from the communities of Roseville, Rocklin, Loomis, and Lincoln are necessary to construct the South Placer facility.

The Grand Jury inspections also revealed the continuing need for office space for administrators and staff. Currently, eight administrators are working in a space intended for four. An unused elevator shaft is being used as clerical space. To increase office space, a feasibility study should be undertaken to extend the front of the building.

The flow of traffic of inmates into and out of the booking area disrupts the process and is very inefficient. The Grand Jury also found that the sally port gate must be left open when transferring detainees, which compromises security. The current vehicle garage could be turned into a pre-booking area where officers can complete paperwork and where arrestees can be tested for drug and/or alcohol intoxication. Past Grand Juries found that the Prisoner Intake Area was too small to accommodate most of the detention vehicles, including large transportation buses and police vehicles dropping off arrestees. Work has begun in this area and is on schedule for completion in mid-2000.

The Minimum Security Jail needs to be expanded to house inmates convicted of misdemeanors. The 1997-98 Grand Jury reported there are two buildings in DeWitt Center that could be converted for use by the Sheriff's Department. These buildings appear to be under-utilized by Facility Services. One is a wood shop that could be converted for use by inmates to learn job skills and to provide services to the County with potential cost savings. This shop could also be used for automobile maintenance, to refurbish machinery, and for other activities that enhance inmate job skills. The other building is next to the Minimum Security Jail and is used for paper storage by Facility Services. This building could be more fully utilized by the Sheriff's Department as classrooms for inmate instructional programs, such as drug and alcohol treatment. That facility could house up to 45 inmates and be expandable to 62. The goals of these programs are to reduce the recidivism rate.

There is some funding available through the "inmate welfare fund" (collected from inmates through their telephone usage and commissary expenditures) to pay for a substantial portion of the remodeling of the buildings in question. Where appropriate, inmate labor should be used to lower the cost of remodeling.

The 1998-99 Grand Jury noted there has been no progress on this issue. The 1999-2000 Grand Jury has enlisted the help of the County Executive Officer to make the program a reality. For further information, see the “Realities Program” report under the County Administration Section of this Final Report.

The medical facility at the Main Jail appears to be efficient and professional. The facility is exceptionally clean, well organized, and adequately staffed. As mentioned, a complaint was received by the Grand Jury regarding the use of medical marijuana in the Jail. Our investigation did determine that, if required by a physician, medical marijuana would be supplied to an inmate.

The Grand Jury also was informed that any medical service costs are included in the “housing” bills sent inmates after their release. The cost of “housing” inmates is set by state law and according to information provided by the Sheriff’s Department, “inmates sentenced to serve time in the Placer County Jail may be charged fees for their incarceration. Those inmates housed at the Main Jail may be charged a fee of \$69.03 per day. Inmates housed at Minimum Security may be charged a fee of \$39.82 per day. The collection of fees is based on the inmate’s ability to pay as determined by Placer County Revenue Services.”

## **Finding 1**

The 1999-2000 Grand Jury is impressed, as were past Grand Juries, with the professionalism and dedication of the Jail’s Commander and staff. It is equally impressed with their commitment to rehabilitation and prevention as well as discipline of the inmates.

Jail personnel are professional and do an excellent job of providing basic custody services with available facilities and funds.

## **Recommendation 1**

The Commander and his staff are to be commended for their efforts. Placer County officials should provide strong support for this three-part approach (rehabilitation, prevention and discipline) to reducing recidivism. This support should include funding, making space available, and remodeling of the facilities, where appropriate.

## **Finding 2**

There exists a serious need to expand the Main Jail and Minimum Security Jail to house additional inmates, provide program space, and provide additional staff space.

## **Recommendation 2A**

The Board of Supervisors, County Executive Officer, Sheriff’s Department, Criminal Justice Policy Commission, and Facility Services Director should all work together to

accomplish the expansion of the Main Jail and Minimum Security Jail.

### **Recommendation 2B**

The 2000-2001 Grand Jury should monitor the progress of the existing and proposed construction at the facility.

### **Finding 3**

The Sheriff's staff, with assistance from the Criminal Justice Policy Committee, has obtained a MIOCR grant to implement a new program designed to address the needs of mentally ill offenders. The planned date for implementation of this program is July 2000.

### **Recommendation 3**

The 2000-2001 Grand Jury should monitor the implementation of this essential program.

### **Finding 4**

The Prisoner Intake area is too small to accommodate detention vehicles safely. At the time of this report, this expansion and remodel was in progress.

### **Recommendation 4**

The 2000-2001 Grand Jury should monitor this construction.

### **Finding 5**

There is a continuing need for more administrative space at the Main Jail.

### **Recommendation 5**

The Sheriff's Department and the Facility Services Director should study the feasibility of extending the building. If feasible, funding should be pursued for such an extension.

### **Finding 6**

The Placer County Sheriff's Department bills through the Revenue Services Department the cost of housing inmates in the Placer County Jails. At present they are able to recoup about one percent of their costs, which is enough to pay for one officer per year and the cost of administering the program. Cost of medical care is figured in the daily "housing" rate and is set by state law.

## **Recommendation 6**

The Placer County Sheriff's Department and the Revenue Services Department should continue to pursue reimbursement of the costs of housing inmates.

## **Finding 7**

Placer County is one of the fastest growing counties in the State of California. By the year 2010, it is projected that 70% of Placer's population will reside in the southern portion of the county, which encompasses the cities of Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln, and Loomis. Obviously the need for corrections facilities in this area will continue to increase.

The Cities of Roseville and Rocklin have agreed to a county facilities fee that will help fund the construction of additional county administration and criminal justice facilities.

## **Recommendation 7**

The Board of Supervisors, County Executive Officer, Sheriff's Department, and Criminal Justice Policy Committee should continue to work towards the approval, funding, and eventual construction of a South Placer facility.

It is this Grand Jury's desire, as it has been for other Grand Juries, that a South County Facility located in the Roseville-Lincoln-Loomis-Rocklin area will be built in the near future.

County officials should continue to work with officials in the communities of Roseville, Rocklin, Loomis, Lincoln, Auburn, and Colfax to develop an equitable cost-sharing plan.

## **Finding 8**

There are over 600 felony warrants and 6,000 misdemeanor warrants outstanding and no facilities to house the offenders.

## **Recommendation 8**

Placer County needs to construct the South Placer Jail Facility.

## **Respondents**

Placer County Sheriff  
Placer County Board of Supervisors  
Placer County Executive Officer  
Placer County Facility Services Director  
Auburn City Council  
Colfax City Council  
Lincoln City Council  
Loomis Town Council  
Rocklin City Council  
Roseville City Council

## **RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:**

The Honorable Larry D. Gaddis  
Presiding Judge, Superior Court  
County of Placer  
Historic Courthouse  
101 Maple Street  
Auburn, CA 95603