

POLICE FACILITIES IN PLACER COUNTY

California Penal Code Section 919 requires the Grand Jury to inspect all local jurisdiction jail facilities within Placer County to evaluate conditions and management, to inquire about prisoners not indicted and to review any changes implemented since the previous Grand Jury's inspection.

Background

During the visits mandated above, members of the 2001-2002 Placer County Grand Jury also observed and evaluated general operation of the individual law enforcement departments and the effects on their communities. All facilities were found to be clean, neat and meeting safety standards, except as noted elsewhere for the Sheriff's substation at Burton Creek in North Lake Tahoe.

Discussion

It was noted that the Placer County Sheriff's Department and the police departments in the incorporated cities of Auburn, Rocklin, Roseville and Lincoln all have intensive programs involving schools and community youth groups, with the result that youth gang activities have decreased significantly. Specific observations follow:

Placer County

Placer County Jail Facilities, operated by the Placer County Sheriff's Department at DeWitt Center in Auburn, are modern, well equipped, organized, staffed, maintained and managed. Supervising officers convey professionalism, expert knowledge, enthusiasm and a unified sense of purpose.

Prisoners, from arrival through booking, classification and incarceration are under close supervision and control at all times. State-of-the-art security technology, including electronic surveillance, is being retrofitted throughout the existing main jail facility and will be incorporated in all building additions.

Officer training and re-training programs are under continuous review and modification, based on changing local, regional and national circumstances. For example, the Sept. 11, 2001 crisis has heightened the department's awareness of possible terrorist activities within the county. Field operations and jail management training content and priorities have been modified accordingly.

The jail complex, where the detention capacity is being expanded by more than 30 percent, is self sufficient in its ability to provide emergency medical and dental services, psychological intervention, pharmacy services, food service, laundry facilities and emergency electrical power, all in support of its primary detention/public safety mission.

Members of the Grand Jury also visited the Sheriff's 911 Dispatch Center, which provides emergency dispatch for law enforcement and also for area fire departments. This is an extremely well designed and operated facility, providing excellent and efficient response to emergencies.

Auburn

At the Auburn Police Department, a special telecommunications system is in effect to handle emergency situations, such as a hazardous materials spill, canyon fire or railroad crisis. This would allow expedient notification to every home in the affected area. The department also has a plan in place for traffic control and emergency evacuation as needed. The Auburn Police Department has an officer on campus at Placer High School. This has resulted in greater safety as well as drug and gang awareness intervention.

A former police chief returned to that post in late April 2002, with a well planned agenda to ensure the safety and well being of community residents. There also is a program for early drug problem intervention, and for dealing with possible gang infiltration into the community. There is a good level of awareness of existing problems and excellent cooperation is provided by neighboring law enforcement agencies.

Roseville

The Roseville Police Department moved into new facilities in 1998 and its jail serves much of South Placer County. Prisoners booked here for minor offenses generally are released within 72 hours. Those charged with more serious crimes are transported to the Placer County Jail in Auburn. Any individuals needing medical attention prior to being booked are taken to Sutter Roseville Hospital for treatment or admission.

The telecommunication system in this community is being handled by the Roseville Fire Department and provides the means to notify area residents quickly in the event of emergencies.

Lincoln

The same individual serves as Police Chief and Fire Chief, and is responsible for the planning and management of both police and fire protective services within the city. Physical facilities for both departments are spacious, modern, well equipped and designed to handle administration of both services. No jail facilities are maintained and none are planned, since utilization of the Placer County Jail is considered more efficient.

The Police and Fire Departments are proactive presences within the community, engaging regularly with schools, churches, youth groups, and civic and social

organizations. Youth gang activity, once a significant community problem, is almost non-existent. The Lincoln Police Activities League (PAL) has broad support from the community. It holds regularly scheduled supervised camps or excursions for more than 500 local children.

The Police Department also originated a youth safety program wherein children riding bicycles, skateboards, scooters, etc., who are cited for not wearing protective helmets, are brought to the police station, lectured on safety and reprimanded appropriately. Thereafter, economically qualified children are given a new safety helmet and are urged to comply with riding safety codes. Positive incentives for voluntary compliance with helmet safety rules are offered in the form of gift certificates for ice cream or other treats provided by local businesses.

Rocklin

A new police station is in the planning and design stage, to replace the present small, cramped facility. The new quarters will be incorporated with other city offices at a new location, tentatively scheduled for occupancy in September 2004. Plans also are underway to have a neighborhood police office in a new fire station to be built at the intersection of Sunset and Sue.

There are 37 line officers, including five sergeants and 28 officers available for street duty. A new Police Chief came on board eight months ago and has reorganized the department to free five officers for patrol duty. The department is up-to-date with the latest and best technical equipment available and the new Chief feels city management is very supportive.

Auto theft and theft from vehicles top criminal problems. Gang activity is almost non-existent, due in part to the financial stability of residents, whose median income is \$60,000. The involvement of parents and educators in creating acceptable outlets for youthful exuberance is a major factor, since much of the life of the youth community centers around school events and activities that use school and community facilities.

There is evidence of increased use of Methamphetamine, primarily in low cost housing areas. This is consistent with the statewide picture.

A full time Resource Officer is assigned to Rocklin High School, while another divides his time between the two middle schools. An active D.A.R.E. program is sustained in the elementary schools through sixth grade. The Police Department has an active Explorer Scout cadet program, with 10-12 active members.

In general, the new Police Chief appears efficient, experienced and capable. He feels the current personnel of the department are "above average in professional application of police duties and sensitive to the rights and respects of the individual."

Finding

The Placer County Sheriff's Department and the law enforcement departments in the cities of Auburn, Roseville, Lincoln and Rocklin are doing an excellent job to protect the residents of their particular areas. This is especially worth commendation in the face of expanding population growth as well as increased problems and tensions within our society.

The Grand Jury feels that Placer County is fortunate to have such a high degree of dedication and professionalism in its law enforcement personnel.

Recommendation

Keep up the good work!

No response is required.