



PLACER COUNTY GRAND JURY

Placer County Jails and Holding Facilities: A Consolidated Report

Annual Inspections

Placer County Jails and Holding Facilities: A Consolidated Report Annual Inspections

Summary

This report summarizes the Grand Jury inspections conducted at the six Placer County jails and holding facilities:

- Historic Courthouse in Auburn (September 27, 2016)
- Placer County Main Jail in Auburn (October 27, 2016)
- Burton Creek Sheriff's Substation in Tahoe City (December 6, 2016)
- South Placer Main Jail in Roseville (December 8, 2016)
- South Placer Minimum Security Facility in Roseville (December 8, 2016)
- Santucci Courthouse in Roseville (December 8, 2016)

On the whole, the Grand Jury found these facilities to be clean, secure and well-managed. Any issues found are addressed in the findings for each facility.

Placer County continues to deal with the results of public safety realignment resulting from AB109 which sought to reduce the overcrowding of California state prisons by

- sentencing less-serious, non-violent felony offenders, with the exception of sex offenders, to a county jail. (Before realignment, any felony sentence of greater than one year would routinely be served in a California state prison);
- sentencing parole violators to serve their sentences in a county jail instead of returning to state prison;
- reducing some felonies to misdemeanors, thereby reducing the term and place of incarceration.

Proposition 47, passed by voters in the 2014 election, reduced penalties for drug and other non-violent crimes. Inmates have successfully petitioned the court to have their convictions reclassified from felonies to misdemeanors, with a corresponding reduction in their sentence. Jail, probation and court personnel are utilized to facilitate this process.

Background

Section 919(b) of the California Penal Code mandates “The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of public prisons within the county.”

Methodology

The Grand Jury visited each facility, interviewed staff, and observed inmates in housing, work and activity areas.

Inspections were led by the following Placer County Sheriff’s staff:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Historic Courthouse | Deputy Rudy Preis |
| Placer County Main Jail | Deputy James Rashid |
| South Placer Main Jail | Deputy Stacey Toy-DeNardi, Compliance Officer |
| Santucci Justice Center | Lieutenant Carol Walsh |
| South Placer Minimum Security | Deputy Stacey Toy-DeNardi, Compliance Officer |
| Burton Creek Substation | Captain Dennis Walsh |

Facts

- Three facilities (Historic Courthouse, Burton Creek, and Santucci Justice Center) contain temporary holding facilities for inmates awaiting scheduled court appearances. Court appearances occur between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. If an inmate is held through lunchtime, a sack lunch and drink are provided.
- Three facilities (two South Placer facilities and Auburn Main Jail) house inmates awaiting court dates or serving out their sentences. The passage of the Public Safety Realignment Act (AB109) in 2011 changed sentencing guidelines throughout the State. “The effect of this bill was to divert people convicted of certain classes of less serious felonies from the Department of Corrections to local county jails.”¹ The longest sentence currently being served in Placer County is nine years.
- All six facilities have a sally port (a secure, controlled entryway to the holding facility). Inmates are brought through the sally port into a secure area and then escorted by one or more deputies into the facility.

¹ CA.Leginfo@ca.gov

- Each of the six facilities has a weapons screening device and all hand-carried items are subject to inspection. Each facility has at least one monitoring station with numerous security cameras.
- In holding cells that have a toilet, the toilet is out of direct view of staff and security cameras. Some holding cells are capable of housing multiple inmates. Inmates are checked every 30 minutes, but those on suicide, health and/or safety watch are checked every 15 minutes.
- A defibrillator is located in each facility.
- **The Historic Courthouse** has three holding cells for six courtrooms.
 - The visual screening material on the fence of the sally port is deteriorated.
- **The Burton Creek facility** was built in 1959. It has four holding cells and one courtroom. Placer County has a contract with the Truckee Jail in Nevada County for housing and booking arrestees as needed.
 - The facility is not fully Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. Some examples include no elevator to the second floor and hallways and bathroom entrances are too narrow to accommodate a wheelchair.
 - The facility has a one-car garage that serves as a sally port. If the transport vehicle is any larger than a squad car, the overhead door must remain open.
 - Numerous past grand jury reports have stated the need to replace this facility as it needs a much larger and more modern way to represent the County in the Tahoe Basin.
- **The Santucci Courthouse** opened in 2008. It was built with the future growth of the County in mind. The facility has 12 basement holding cells (connected via a tunnel to the adjacent Main Jail). There are six holding cells between the courtrooms on the first floor and four holding cells between courtrooms on the second floor, serving a total of nine courtrooms.
- **The South Placer Adult Corrections Facility** at the Santucci Justice Center opened in May 2014. The 200,000 square-foot part of the main jail has a capacity of 420 inmates.
 - Inmates are screened for mental and physical health at intake. When staff is made aware of inmates having health issues, they call for an evaluation to determine if medical services are necessary. There is an on-site medical wing with staff to provide evaluations and services. Mental Health services are available in person or via video conferencing.

- Correctional staff stated they are committed to working with inmates to help them become successful upon their release.
- Educational and Vocational Programs are available via a contract with the Sacramento County Office of Education. The curriculum provides and develops basic education as well as developing computer and job-seeking skills.
- Officers stated that the booking facility will open in June or July of 2017. This will relieve south County police agencies from having to transport prisoners to Auburn for booking.

- **The South Placer Minimum Security**

The South Placer Minimum Security Facility opened in May 2014. The facility consists of two areas that house up to 60 inmates each.

- Inmates are given the opportunity to work inside the jail to learn new skills. In exchange they can receive additional credit for time served and additional privileges.

- **The Auburn Main Jail**

The Auburn Main Jail opened in 1985. As of June 2016, this facility has a California Board of State and Community Corrections rating of 492 inmates. The inmate population was 448 at that time.

- Inmates are screened for mental and physical health at intake. The staff is made aware of inmates' health issues and work with these inmates to obtain necessary services. An on-site clinic provides medical services. Mental Health services are available in person or via video conferencing.
- Educational and Vocational Programs are also available via a contract with the Sacramento County Office of Education. The curriculum provides and develops basic education as well as developing computer and job seeking skills.
- An Inmate Welfare Fund is financed by inmates and there is a small voluntary fee on items purchased from the commissary. This fund is used to purchase educational equipment.
- Inmates are permitted to "govern" some of their own activities (TV programs, etc.).

Findings:

The Grand Jury found:

- F1. There is a need to replace the Burton Creek facility due to lack of elevators and overall ADA non-compliance. The County needs a modernized facility in the Tahoe Basin to provide booking and housing of arrestees, rather than contracting out-of-county for these services.
- F2. The Burton Creek facility sally port poses a security risk because it is not large enough to allow the external overhead door to close behind large transport vehicles.
- F3. All six Placer County jails and holding facilities were clean and appeared to be well-maintained and well-managed.
- F4. Some jail inmates are now spending longer sentences in a County facility as a result of the passage of AB109, which has required the County to allocate more resources to existing facilities.
- F5. The opening of the booking facility at the South Placer Main Jail will enable south County law enforcement officers to return to duty more quickly than the current system by not having to transport prisoners to Auburn Main Jail.
- F6. In addition to health and addiction services, programs are available to help inmates improve job skills, education, socialization skills and self-esteem.
- F7. Visual security at the Historic Courthouse sally port is compromised due to the deterioration of the screening material.

Conclusion

As a result of the shifting of responsibilities from the State to counties, the jail population now consists of inmates incarcerated for more serious offenses and for longer terms. Progress is being made to provide educational, vocational, mental and physical health services. These services are necessary to meet the needs of this evolving inmate population and potentially reduce recidivism rates.

All Placer County jails and holding cells are secure and appear to be well-managed, with the exception of the Burton Creek facility. The building does not meet ADA requirements and does not function as a booking and holding facility.

Placer County has recently approved two large development projects that will substantially increase the population in the service area of Burton Creek. The Grand Jury has determined it is time for the Board of Supervisors to start the process to replace this facility.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury makes the following recommendations:

Auburn Historic Courthouse:

- R1.** Repair or replace the screening material surrounding the sally port.

Burton Creek:

- R2.** Provide funding and site location for a new facility, meeting the current and future requirements of the area.

South Placer Minimum Security Facility:

None

Auburn Main Jail:

None

Santucci Courthouse:

None

Request for Responses:

| | <u>Recommendations Requiring Response</u> | <u>Response Due Date</u> |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| Board of Supervisors 175 Fulweiler Ave. Auburn, CA 95603 | R2 | September 30, 2017 |
| Sheriff Devon Bell Placer County Sheriff-Coroner-Marshal Dewitt Justice Center 2929 Richardson Drive Auburn, CA 95603 | R1 | August 31, 2017 |

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