

- I. 2000-2001 Grand Jury report on DETENTION FACILITIES AND SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT ISSUES
- II. Published June 7, 2001
- III. Each year the Grand Jury is mandated, by law, to inspect detention facilities. The 2000-2001 Grand Jury Report on Santa Barbara's detention facilities was divided into three parts: Long-Term County Jail Facilities; Short-Term Jail Facilities; and Sheriff's Special Operations Division.

Long-Term County Jail Facilities are the Santa Barbara Main Jail, Santa Maria Jail, Male Honor Farm, and the Female Honor Farm. These facilities are available to detain individuals booked on criminal offenses for longer than four hours. In addition there are 13 short-term detention facilities which are for holding offenders for up to four hours. These include Sheriff's sub-stations at Isla Vista, Lompoc, Buellton, Solvang, New Cuyama, and Carpinteria as well as the Court Holding facilities in Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Lompoc. There are also municipal police stations in the Cities of Santa Barbara, Lompoc, Santa Maria and Guadalupe. All the above facilities including the Santa Barbara Sobering Center were visited one or more times by the Grand Jury. The third part of the report concerns the Sheriff Department's Special operations Division which consists of their Mounted Unit, Aviation Bureau, Bomb Squad, and Coroner Bureau.

- IV. Key Grand Jury Recommendations where there is disagreement or need for follow up:

Recommendation 1e: Only Main Jail housed inmates should be subject to early release when that facility's population exceeds the jail cap. A remedy should be found that excludes inmates housed in other County detention facilities from being released when the jail cap necessitates inmate release from the Main Jail.

Sheriff's Department Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

This concept was considered, studied, and ultimately rejected by the jail Overcrowding Task Force prior to the court-ordered male cap. This task force was comprised of representatives from various Santa Barbara County agencies including the Sheriff's Department, County Counsel, Public Defender, Office of the County Administrator, District Attorney, Mental Health, the Courts, Board of Supervisors and Probation, as well as the Lompoc Police Department and representative from the ACLU. The Task Force concluded that a "facility specific cap" was counterproductive in that it would undoubtedly result in inmates

refusing to be sent to the Honor Farm or purposely being disqualified by violating jail rules in the hope of being released early due to overcrowding. This would violate one of the primary elements of the current early release program, which is designed to safeguard the community by releasing the least serious offenders first. Necessarily, those same inmates are the ones that typically qualify for housing at the minimum-security facilities.

Recommendation 6: Hire medically trained professionals at the Santa Maria Jail to allow medically needy inmates to stay up to 96 hours in the Santa Maria jail.

Sheriff's Department Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

This issue was addressed during the negotiations for the current medical contract with PHS (the medical provider for Sheriff's Custody). We determined such service to be cost prohibitive.

Recommendation 11: Reclassification of the Santa Maria Jail as a Type II facility should be analyzed by the Sheriff's Department in order to be able to house appropriate inmates longer than 96 hours at the facility. This analysis should be based on the social and financial costs of premature release of inmates from the County jails (regular and Special Medical Transports, extradition transfers, and health liability issues, as listed in Recommendation 9) should also be considered.

Sheriff's Department Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The corrections facility needs of Santa Barbara County has been analyzed in the Community Based Punishment Options Planning for the County of Santa Barbara (1996), the North County Santa Barbara Correctional Planning (Needs Assessment, 1992, and updated in June of 2000) each of these documents recommends the construction of a North County Jail facility. The most recent study indicated that we need a minimum of 400 beds in North County just to meet today's need, not taking into consideration the bed space requirement for future needs. In addition, every other Grand Jury dating back to 1993-94 recommended the construction of a new North County Jail facility.

It would be fiscally irresponsible to conduct a study to convert the 32-bed Santa Maria Branch Jail to a Type II standard. The construction costs alone to rebuild this facility would be cost prohibitive. Furthermore, the costs of operating a 32-bed facility as a Type II facility would be an irresponsible waste of the taxpayers'

money. The handful of beds that could potentially be used to hold longer-term inmates would not make a dent in the overcrowding at the Main Jail. Currently, the Santa Maria Branch Jail is full on most weekends. It is only during the week that extra beds are available. If inmates were held there longer than 96 hours, we would be faced with severe overcrowding in that facility every weekend, thus defeating the whole purpose of using that facility to prevent early releases.

Recommendation 17: The Sheriff's Department should restore the integrity of time necessary for behavior modification therapy to be effective for women trustees at the Female Honor Farm.

Sheriff's Department Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

As stated in our Response to Finding 17, the programs administered by Inmate Services are not designed for "specific and firm time periods." Also refer to our Responses to Findings 13a and 13b. Furthermore, we do not provide "behavior modification therapy" to inmates at any of our facilities. In all our facilities, we do expect inmates to follow the rules while in custody and we have a disciplinary system in place consistent with Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations for inmates that violate the rules. However, it is not "therapy" in any sense of the word.

V. Synopsis:

Number of responses to recommendations required – 47

Number of responses to recommendations in which the respondent agreed with or implemented the recommendation – 25

Number of responses to recommendations in which the respondent disagreed with the recommendation – 15

Number of responses to recommendations that require further study or analysis to establish a position -- 7