

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
AND  
DETENTION FACILITIES**

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## **SPECIAL REPORTS**

### **THE ELECTRONIC COURTROOM**

#### **Video Arraignment Saves Time and \$\$\$\$\$**

The use of video to conduct arraignments between courtrooms and incarceration facilities has grown steadily since its introduction in the early 1980's. This increase is largely due to the hefty financial savings for the jurisdictions that have adopted *video arraignment*. In addition, courts adopting video systems are finding not just cost savings, but increased efficiency in processing prisoners, ease of implementation, and increased safety to the public.

#### **Introduction**

Arraignment is the appearance of a prisoner in front of a judge within 72 hours of arrest. At that time, a charge is brought and a pleading of guilt or innocence entered. The majority of cases are settled at arraignment, usually with a sentence entered on a lesser charge.

In Santa Barbara County, arraignments are currently conducted in person: A prisoner is transported to a courtroom in North or South County from the Santa Barbara County Main Jail by the Sheriff's Department Transportation Unit.

With video links installed at the Main Jail and both North and South County courts, prisoners would no longer need to be transported from the jail to be arraigned. They would instead be escorted to a site within the jail for secure video link with the appropriate court.

The Grand Jury believes that the installation of a video arraignment system in Santa Barbara County would:

- Eliminate the need to transport prisoners for arraignment, thereby improving public safety
- Reduce the fleet of Sheriff's Department vehicles and/or their use and maintenance
- Improve the efficiency of prisoner processing
- Save the county substantial funds

### **Background of Video Arraignment**

Video links between courts and jail facilities began in 1982 with misdemeanor first appearances. Since that time, the use of court video has expanded in application and been adopted by 17 states. Several additional states and many more municipalities are currently considering implementing video in their courts.

In California, use of video in the courtroom began in 1983 when the California Legislature added section 977.2 to the Penal Code establishing pilot projects for video in the court system. In 1991, the Judicial Council reported to the Legislature on these pilot projects. The report concluded that the 14 participating courts enthusiastically supported video arraignment.

Though most courts expressed enthusiasm for the technology, there were some jurisdictions that were unable to successfully implement it. Consequently, in 1995 a study was conducted by the National Center for State Courts to explain why some courts had been unable to use this new technology.

This study determined that some jurisdictions were resistant to changing the way business had been conducted and were not convinced that installation of video would be a significant cost savings. Further, some jurisdictions were unable to overcome some of the inter-agency conflicts that arose during preliminary talks and therefore never moved past the discussion stage.

Since 1995 video technology has improved dramatically. The purchase of a video arraignment system has come down in cost and the system has increased in functionality. In addition, the economic landscape of California has changed drastically in these intervening eight years. Many jurisdictions face significant budget shortfalls and this new reality has fostered a spirit of cooperation among the various affected agencies in reducing county budgets throughout the state.

Despite some of the hurdles to implementing video technology, the majority of California counties using court video are pleased with it. These counties include San Diego County, Del Norte County, Madera County, Kings County, Los Angeles County, San Bernardino County, Alameda County and Imperial County. All report cost savings and improved safety.

### **Observations**

The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department maintains a Transportation Unit for the transport of prisoners within Santa Barbara County. This unit has prepared financial reports since 1991 on the costs incurred by the department for transporting prisoners from the Main Jail on Calle Real in Santa Barbara to arraignment and trial in both North and South Santa Barbara County. The reports also detail the costs of

maintaining a fleet of vehicles for this transport. The Transportation Unit's costs include man hours and vehicle maintenance. These combined costs in each of the last three years, 2001, 2002 and 2003, exceeded \$203,000.

Figures on what percentage of this \$203,000 annual cost is attributable to arraignments have not been kept. However, Sheriff's Department sources maintain that it is well over half of this amount. In addition, a majority of inmates scheduled for arraignment are transported to North County from the Main Jail, which costs substantially more than trips to the South County court. The Sheriff's Department Transportation Unit estimates that the costs of moving inmates to courts in north or south county are between \$120,000 and \$150,000 annually for arraignments alone.

What these costs do not reflect, however, is the potential danger to public safety of transporting prisoners on public thoroughfares, wear and tear on roads, increased traffic and vehicle emissions.

### **Costs/Benefits of Installing Video in Santa Barbara County**

This Grand Jury conducted a preliminary examination of the costs of purchasing the equipment necessary to conduct video arraignments. Research was done on-line, in the marketplace and through conversations with jurisdictions already using video arraignment. The Jury determined that the costs of installing a video arraignment system in Santa Barbara County would be less than the Sheriff's Department transportation unit's annual budget attributable to arraignments.

The Santa Barbara County government infrastructure already has fiber optic cable installed which can carry the necessary signal, so costs would be limited to the purchase of cameras and some additional equipment at each site as well as the costs of installation. A preliminary cost estimate, supplied by Court Vision in Thousand Oaks indicates a minimum of \$5,500 per site or \$16,500 for three, to a high of \$20,000 per site, or a total of \$60,000. With both these high and low estimates, costs for installing a video system at the Main Jail and both North and South County courts hearing arraignments, are substantially lower than even half of the Sheriff's Department Transportation Unit annual budget of \$203,000.

In jurisdictions from Ohio, to North Carolina, to California, substantial budgetary savings are cited as the biggest feature for installing a video arraignment system. However, as mentioned above, there will be additional benefits, such as the reduced flight risk of prisoners and increased efficiency of prisoner processing, which are hard to quantify but which should still be factored into the cost/benefit analysis.

It is beyond the purview of this Grand Jury report to discuss the type of video system to be installed or to recommend exactly how it should be used, but only to show that such a system would be a cost effective reallocation of county funds.

### **Overcoming Obstacles and Looking to the Future**

There has been some resistance to using video arraignment in Santa Barbara County. For example, public defenders have felt that face to face meetings with clients are critical to a prisoner's right to a fair trial. This criticism has been addressed in other jurisdictions by assigning a public defender to be present at the jail while the client's assigned lawyer is in court with the judge during video arraignment.

Most jurisdictions successfully using video arraignment initially set up investigatory committees or Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils to explore the purchase of video arraignment systems. These committees and councils are set up using staff from agencies within existing government structures, at no additional cost to county or city budgets. These committees and councils consist of Judges, Public Defenders, Assistant District Attorneys, Sheriff's Department personnel and other interested parties. Santa Barbara County has an Information Technology Expert on staff who might make a good addition to such a council.

The immediate cost savings will most likely impact the Sheriff's Department Transportation Budget. However, according to some members of the Santa Barbara County Judiciary, reallocation of funds may need to occur. For example, as manpower and vehicle maintenance expenses are saved by the Sheriff's Department, the maintenance of a video conferencing and arraignment system will need to be added to the county's overall budget.

If there is difficulty with reallocating existing budgetary expenditures, other jurisdictions currently using video in the arraignment process have installed the systems with the assistance of one or more of the following sources:

- Criminal justice facilities construction funds
- County general funds
- Court and agency budgets
- Cable franchise funds
- Administrative office of the courts
- Grants through air quality management districts, state justice institutes, and other grant sources

Finally, coordinating councils have created efficient new ways to handle court business, such as the signing of pleas at arraignment. Other changes include the reassignment of Sheriff's Department personnel and the potential hiring of an additional public defender to handle pleas at the jail. These are the kinds of details that each jurisdiction works out for itself.

### **Conclusion**

As more states, counties and localities adopt video technology, more uses will be found for it. In addition, lawmakers, public defenders, district attorneys and judges need to cut costs along with other agencies and departments in County government.

There will always be the need for a transportation unit in Santa Barbara County and the means by which to move prisoners (e.g., for trial and medical attention). However, the installation of court video will reduce both transportation costs and the costs of the current arraignment process substantially, making video arraignment a change for the better in Santa Barbara County.

#### **Finding 1**

The installation of a video arraignment system would be a cost cutting and safety enhancing method of conducting the arraignment of prisoners in Santa Barbara County.

#### **Recommendation 1**

The Grand Jury recommends that a video arraignment system be installed in both North and South Santa Barbara County.

### **Affected Agencies**

#### **Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors**

Finding	1
Recommendation	1

#### **Santa Barbara County District Attorney**

Finding	1
Recommendation	1

#### **Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department**

Finding	1
Recommendation	1

#### **Santa Barbara County Superior Court**

Finding	1
Recommendation	1

#### **Santa Barbara County Information Technology Services**

Finding	1
Recommendation	1

**Office of the Public Defender**

Finding	1
Recommendation	1

## EARLY RELEASE

### Who's Out First?

The Santa Barbara County Main Jail houses 650 male and 101 female inmates. When the population of the Main Jail reaches its capacity, prisoners are released early by a process known as “capping out.” However, the criteria for this procedure is not the same for males and females.

Capping out began in the early 1980's to relieve overcrowding, which resulted in “floor sleeping” conditions among the male population. A multi-jurisdictional task force was formed to address this issue. The committee consisted of representatives from the Courts, Public Defender, County Counsel, District Attorney, Sheriff's Department, local police agencies, and Mental Health and Probation Departments. A directive was written in February 1989 that specified criteria for early release of male inmates. The requirements do not allow for release of prisoners who have committed felony crimes, have other warrants or who are repeat offenders.

The Task Force continued to meet through the 1990's. The program has proven to be reasonably successful in handling male inmate overcrowding. However, in the most recent report issued by the California Board of Corrections, overcrowding resulting in “floor sleeping” was noted as still occurring.

Early release was not instituted for the female population until 1996, and female inmates are released under different criteria than male inmates. Seriousness of crime is not considered when releasing female inmates. Only time served is considered. Those who have served the longest time are released first. These criteria have not changed since their inception. The Grand Jury questioned why there are different criteria. Is this equality?

There are approximately one fifth as many women prisoners as men, but the severity of crimes committed by females has been increasing over the last decade. A December 2003 New York Times article entitled, *Women Find a New Arena for Equality: Prison*, documented a sharp rise nationally in the arrest rate of women in most crime categories since the early 1990's. Since there has been overcrowding among the female inmate population, necessitating an early release program in Santa Barbara County, it can be concluded that female crime is on the rise here as well.

In 2003, over 1,000 women were booked into the Main Jail. Of those, over 600 were booked on felony charges. In a recent analysis, 36 women were qualified for early release. Four of these women would not have been eligible if the same criteria used for male inmates had been applied.

**Finding 1**

Different criteria are used to release male and female inmates when overcrowded conditions exist at the Main Jail in Santa Barbara County. Males are released based on the seriousness of the crime committed; females are released on time served only - "first in, first out."

**Recommendation 1**

The disparity between the male and female early release criteria should be eliminated for the sake of equality and public safety.

**Affected Agencies****Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department**

Finding 1

Recommendation 1

**Office of the Public Defender**

Finding 1

Recommendation 1

## DETENTION FACILITIES

**The 2003-2004 Grand Jury wishes to express its thanks to the officers and support personnel for their service to Santa Barbara County. The Jury finds that Santa Barbara detention facilities are staffed with professional and dedicated personnel.**

### OBJECTIVE

To comply with California Penal Code 919(b) which mandates that each year members of the Grand Jury inquire into the condition and management of public prisons within the County.

### INTRODUCTION

The following report covers detention facilities within the county of Santa Barbara. These facilities fall into three categories, as follows:

- Facilities operated by the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department:
  - Carpinteria Station
  - Coroner's Bureau
  - Figueroa St. Court Holding Facility
  - Isla Vista Station
  - Main Jail
  - Men's Honor Farm
  - Santa Ynez and Buellton Stations
  - Santa Maria Station
  - Women's Honor Farm
  
- Facilities operated by municipal police departments:
  - Guadalupe Police Department
  - Lompoc Police Department
  - Santa Barbara Police Department
  - Santa Maria Police Department
  
- Facilities under the control of the County Probation Department:
  - Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall
  - Santa Maria Juvenile Hall
  - Los Prietos Boys' Camp/Tri-Counties Boot Camp

## **PROCEDURE**

This Grand Jury visited each of the facilities listed in this report. Deputies and staff members who were on duty at the time of each visit were interviewed. All facilities were inspected at least once and some sites were visited two or more times.

## **MUNICIPAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS**

### **Guadalupe Police Department**

The Guadalupe Police Department is housed in an historic building built in 1920 that has not been well-maintained. The Department serves the city population of approximately 5,800. All other city services operate from this location as well.

The Police Department processes adult suspects at this site and then transports them to the Santa Maria Sheriff's Station. Juveniles committing misdemeanor offenses are cited and released to their parents. Juveniles committing felonies are booked into Santa Maria Juvenile Hall.

The Police Department's annual operating budget is \$893,000, plus a yearly grant of \$102,000 from the State. This grant pays the salary of two officers and a portion of the salary of a community service officer. In addition to the Chief of Police, the Police Department employs 12 full-time officers, one canine team, two reserve officers, two sergeants, one community service officer, and one evidence technician. There are no lieutenants or detectives. One officer's position is designated for SABERNET, which is a drug enforcement task force operated by the Drug Enforcement Agency. Half the salary for this position is paid for by the State.

### **Lompoc Police Department**

The Lompoc Police Department is located at the Civic Center Plaza in the City of Lompoc. In addition to the Chief of Police, there are 40 sworn officers as well as support staff. The facility is well maintained and equipped to provide effective and professional police service.

The Jury was impressed with the Department's role of leadership evidenced by a high level of community input and participation. Two programs that particularly exemplified this leadership role are the Lompoc Citizens' Police Academy and the Drug Abuse Resistance Program (DARE). The Lompoc Police Department remains the only agency in Santa Barbara County offering the DARE program at the middle school and senior high school levels. Other DARE programs end at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level. In addition, the Citizens' Police Academy offers participants a 15-week training program designed to provide an inside look into all aspects of law enforcement in Lompoc. Graduates are used in a variety of non-peace officer assignments on a volunteer basis.

The Lompoc Police Department also provides assistance when needed to the Lompoc Federal Prison. Officers help at times with crowd control in the event of demonstrations or escape of prisoners. They do not become involved in situations which may occur inside the prison itself.

Like most agencies in Santa Barbara County, the Department has budget constraints. Lompoc's crime rate, however, is less than would be expected for similarly sized cities.

### **Santa Barbara Police Department**

The Santa Barbara Police Department (SBPD), on East Figueroa Street, operates out of two facilities at that location.

The main facility serves as a detention and operational center. The street level of the main facility has two holding cells and three interrogation rooms, with remaining rooms for writing reports, entering evidence, and servicing the public. The second floor holds the offices of the Chief of Police and his assistants. The basement houses the Combined Communication Center (CCC), which is the Dispatch Center for the Police Department as well as the Fire Department. Police personnel with special training monitor the CCC computers constantly. During emergency situations, the CCC has the capability of coordinating police and fire department deployment in conjunction with the County Sheriff's Department. The basement also houses a briefing room, SWAT Team storage room, locker room with showers, emergency generator, and a shooting range. The Harbor Patrol, Airport Security, as well as the SBPD, use the shooting range.

The second facility is a rented annex at the rear of the main facility, which is used primarily for additional administration office space. The motorcycle component of the Department also operates out of this location.

The Department has a fleet of over 50 patrol and unmarked vehicles, plus eight motorcycles. The parking lot for officers and support staff is located between the main facility and the rented annex. The size of the parking lot is inadequate. Many patrol cars are parked on Figueroa Street and unmarked cars are parked farther away, some of which are subject to occasional vandalism. Officers and support staff, as well as visitors, must often park blocks away.

The Department employs 150 sworn officers, an additional 18 reserve officers, and 75 support staff. Work shifts are 10 hours per day, Monday through Thursday, and 12 hours per day, Friday through Sunday. In 2003, 2,288 detainees passed through the holding cells at the facility. Most detainees under arrest are held for less than four hours before being transported to the Santa Barbara County for booking, pre-arraignment, and/or pre-trial detention.

The Department operates under a policy of community-oriented policing. A significant feature of this policy is that police officers make every attempt to meet face-to-face with any person who files a crime report, especially if it is a felony. It runs a Community Police Academy to further the cause of community involvement. Three times a year the Academy offers a 12-week course to instruct interested citizens about all facets of community policing. One of these courses is offered in Spanish. During the summer the Academy offers a daytime program for teens. The Police Activities League (PAL) for youth is another successful program. These programs are all part of SBPD's Community-Oriented Problem Solving (COPS), which has been successfully initiated by the current Chief of Police.

### **Santa Maria Police Department**

The Santa Maria Police department is located on Cook Street in the city of Santa Maria. Overcrowding due to space and budget constraints at the Santa Maria Police Department continues to be a major problem. However, an adjacent facility, formerly a Santa Maria Fire Department, is being remodeled for use by the Police Department. When completed, the new facility will provide additional space for training, a men's locker room, and those administrative activities which can be physically transferred to the new location.

The current facility also lacks incarceration space. One holding cell situated in a main hallway is designed to be temporary and is normally occupied for only a few hours. A secured railing anchored just outside the cell in the hallway is used to handcuff prisoners when multiple arrests require additional detainment. This practice has the potential for security problems, since the hallway is a main thoroughfare for officers and staff in the Department. Moreover, there is no separate facility for housing juvenile detainees or for any medical unit to attend to medical problems. Prisoners are transported to the Santa Maria Sheriff's Station as soon as police are available to do so.

Operationally, the Department functions very efficiently given the limited space available. Fourteen officers work on patrol, in addition to an Investigation Division comprised of ten detectives, a Sergeant and Lieutenant. There is an adequate laboratory for fingerprinting and drug testing.

The jurisdiction of the Police Department officially ends at the city limits; however, a well-organized and cooperative relationship exists with the Highway Patrol and the County Sheriff's Department during crisis situations.

Volunteers are used to enforce minor violations such as parking, abandoned vehicles and other municipal infractions. This program works very well, and the Department should be commended for its innovative approach in relieving officers for other more serious duties.

## **PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

### **Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall**

Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall, located on Hollister Avenue, consists of a 56-bed detention facility, Santa Barbara Juvenile Probation Services and Juvenile Court. There are 25 paid staff at the facility. A nurse is on duty full-time during the week.

Juvenile Hall is used to temporarily detain minors up to 18 years of age before and after arraignment. The average stay is two weeks; however, it can be as long as ten months for those awaiting placement due to special circumstances.

The facility houses both male and female youth offenders in cells that are private and secure. Seventy percent of the youths in Juvenile Hall come from North County. Increased numbers can cause overcrowding though this condition should be eased when an expanded facility in Santa Maria is opened in late 2004.

Two well-equipped classrooms are used to provide juvenile detainees the mandated four and a half hours of daily academic education. Each classroom has a teacher and a classroom aide, with a special educational resource specialist available on an "as needed" basis. There is also a well-stocked library and a reading program offered. Drug and alcohol education is provided, as well as courses in childcare and anger management. Moreover, numerous volunteer organizations help with a variety of outreach programs.

Recently a work furlough program was cut due to County budget constraints. This program allowed youths to leave the facility and work in the community under Juvenile Hall staff supervision. This valuable program helped the youth develop a work ethic and a sense of responsibility. It is sorely missed.

Volleyball, basketball, jogging, weightlifting and other types of physical activity are offered in a large outdoor area. A small swimming pool is also on site. All programs at Juvenile Hall emphasize organization, discipline and structure.

Those in charge at the Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall expressed a true commitment to helping troubled juveniles.

**Finding 1**

The furlough program which has been discontinued was a positive activity that offered juveniles a positive work experience and provided a valuable community service.

**Recommendation 1**

This valuable program should be reinstated when funds become available.

**Affected Agencies**

**Santa Barbara County Probation Department**

Finding	1
Recommendation	1

### **Santa Maria Juvenile Hall**

The Santa Maria Juvenile Hall is located next to the Sheriff's Station on Foster Road in Santa Maria. A new facility is in the process of being built adjacent to the current building, with an expected completion date of October, 2004. At that time the North County Juvenile Court will be transferred to the new facility.

The new facility will be able to handle 90 minors. The design features two-story, self-contained housing units, or "pods," each of which will house a maximum of 30 juveniles. These pods will include classrooms, a recreation area, food service and sleeping dormitories.

Juveniles housed at this facility have committed misdemeanor or felony offenses. Those arrested usually appear in court within 48 hours. Ages range from 13 to 19 years, but some are as young as nine years old. Juveniles convicted of offenses such as truancy, running away from home, or incorrigible behavior are not incarcerated.

A nurse is on duty for 40 hours a week, and a doctor for four hours two days a week. There is no medical care on weekends, but a doctor is on call. If an emergency medical situation arises on a weekend involving a juvenile, he/she must be transported to a local hospital by a staff member for appropriate medical care. This potentially leaves the facility short-handed.

The Juvenile Hall is currently staffed with 39 employees servicing a maximum of 50 juveniles. These positions include institutional officers, clerical support and food service workers. There is electronic surveillance in most cells and hallways to monitor activity.

Staffing will increase to a proposed 68 positions which will include several positions unique to the expanded facility. These will include 24/7 coverage in the control center, staff to supervise minors prior to court appearance, staff to handle transportation, and the addition of a utility clerk and a receptionist.

With the downsizing of the Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall, some staff positions from that facility may be transferred to accommodate staffing needs at the Santa Maria Facility.

### **Los Prietos Boy's Camp/Tri-Counties Boot Camp**

The Los Prietos Boys Camp and Tri-Counties Boot Camp are County owned and part of the Probation Department. The camps are located on 17 acres of beautiful, wooded forest land leased from the Los Padres National Forest. Both camps are twenty-four hour residential, correction and treatment facilities for male court wards between the ages of 13 and 17 years old.

Boys assigned to the Camps by order of the Juvenile Court have evidenced critical gaps in their upbringing. Combined with the pressures of adult society, school and peer relationships, this has led to anti-social and illegal behavior. At no time, however, according to Camp officials, are these juveniles considered "throw away kids."

Juveniles placed in these programs must possess the necessary self-control to benefit from a varied, challenging program in an open residential setting. The educational needs of the boys are provided by Los Robles High School (Los Prietos) and Academy High School (Boot Camp). These schools are on site and operated by the Santa Barbara County Education Office.

Los Prietos Boys Camp (fifty-six beds, all in use) was established in 1944 as a residential treatment center for juveniles convicted of misdemeanors or felonies.

Tri-Counties Boot Camp (forty beds, nineteen in use at the time of the Jury's visit) was established in 1997 as a 4-month early intervention program for wards from Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo Counties. Historically, this program was designed to meet the needs of non-violent, non-felony juveniles. In the future, this facility will no longer be a Tri-County camp. Ventura now has its own juvenile residential treatment center; San Luis Obispo will no longer send juveniles in 2004 due to budget constraints. There are currently empty beds in the Boot Camp, although the Court has mandated placement for specific juveniles. Assignments are not being made due to lack of funds in the Probation Department for the additional staffing required.

Also due to budget constraints, plans are currently underway to restructure the programs in both camps.

The Jury was pleased to see the high level of mutual respect and commitment among the Director, staff and the boys in residence. There is an atmosphere of motivation and cooperation among the youth. Follow-up programs created during the incarceration period and continued following juveniles' release are an important component of the Camps' apparent success.

**Finding 1**

The facilities at the Boot Camp and Boys' Camp are underutilized due to a lack of sufficient staffing. Beds remain empty.

**Recommendation 1**

Funds should be made available to increase the staff at the Camps so that the additional placements can be made.

**Affected Agencies**

**Santa Barbara County Probation Department**

Finding                    1  
Recommendation       1

## **SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

### **Carpinteria Station**

The Carpinteria Station is located in the City Hall building on Carpinteria Avenue. Police services are provided under a renewable five-year contract between the City of Carpinteria and the County Sheriff's Department. From this station the Sheriff's Department also provides service for the unincorporated areas of Montecito, Summerland and the Carpinteria Valley. Included at the site are a lobby/reception area, offices, holding cells, a report writing room, evidence and locker rooms. Approximately thirty-five staff members are employed at the station, consisting of records specialists, officers, and one lieutenant.

In accordance with a 2002-2003 Grand Jury recommendation, the facility has been remodeled and updated, using funds allocated by the City Manager and from grants. Additional improvements are planned, including an adjacent physical fitness room, expansion and reconfiguration of the locker room, and new equipment in the evidence room, all critical needs at the facility. A Community Response Vehicle has been purchased and is used for a variety of police outreach programs. The Department also has an eye catching Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE ) vehicle.

The Department is to be commended for reaching out to the community in many ways, such as:

- The Safeguard program for educating children
- The DARE program in local schools
- Neighborhood and vacation watch services
- A pro-active gang program
- Participation in town hall meetings to address concerns of citizens

Housing costs on the South Coast make it difficult for the police officers to live in and be part of the community they serve. Nonetheless, the Carpinteria Station has superior staff longevity.

**Finding 1**

The Carpinteria Police Department/Sheriff's Coastal Station is outgrowing the existing facility.

**Recommendation 1**

Expansion or relocation, if not already under consideration, should be taken under advisement.

**Affected Agencies**

**Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department**

Finding 1

Recommendation 1

### **Coroner's Bureau**

The Santa Barbara County Coroner's Bureau is located on San Antonio Road off Hollister Avenue in Santa Barbara. The facility is difficult to locate because of inadequate signage on Hollister Avenue.

Since last year, there have been several physical changes which have improved the operational function of the complex as well as its physical appearance. These changes were implemented following last year's Grand Jury recommendations and the Sheriff's Department upgrade recommendations.

The main office has a small reception area and two newly renovated office areas. One serves as the sergeant's office and the other as a meeting, break or occasional bereavement room. The area is clean, well lit and serviceable. A large, modular building at the back of the property houses the office of the medical examiner and deputy investigators' work area. The room is spacious and lends itself to team operations. The facility was found to be compact yet efficient.

With eight full-time employees at this location, the Bureau investigates an estimated 1300 deaths each year, and an average of 175 autopsies are performed. Approximately half of the bodies requiring autopsies are transported from North County. A full-time forensic pathologist, whose position was created in 2002-2003, leaves the Coroner's Bureau to perform autopsies at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital. The hospital currently charges the county a \$175 facility use fee. Due to the installation of budgeted equipment, the autopsy suite at the Coroner's Bureau now has the capability to perform all autopsies on site. On site autopsies would eliminate the need to transport bodies to and from Cottage Hospital, thus avoiding potential damage to a corpse and/or injury to the technicians who are doing heavy lifting. Furthermore, the assigned investigating deputy who stays at Cottage Hospital during each autopsy would be able to remain at the Coroner's Bureau and work on cases in his/her office. Staff time would be used more efficiently, thus saving the county money.

The morgue holds up to 25 bodies awaiting autopsy or transfer to appropriate funeral facilities. The Santa Maria Sheriff's Station also has a facility for holding bodies awaiting transport to the Coroner's Bureau. Bodies that remain unclaimed are turned over to the Public Administrator after all attempts to locate a family or a responsible party are exhausted by the Sheriff's investigators.

The toxicology laboratory, adjacent to the autopsy room, is small and somewhat cramped. There is an old generator on site that is used during power outages. It is serviceable, but it is not an automatic system, sometimes resulting in delayed or lost testing. The Coroner's Bureau contracts with National Medical Services (NMS) to

provide tests that are out of the scope of the on site toxicology laboratory, which is only equipped to process tests for street drugs and alcohol substances. The budgeted costs for the use of the National Medical Services are minimal compared with the operating costs of the on site toxicology laboratory. The county could greatly reduce costs by eliminating the Coroner's Bureau toxicology lab and sending all blood and tissue samples to a contracted facility such as NMS.

**Finding 1**

There is no signage on Hollister Avenue at San Antonio Road, indicating the Coroner's Bureau location further down San Antonio Road (especially needed for bereaved clientele). The signage at the Bureau's driveway is also inadequate.

**Recommendation 1**

Place a county sign on Hollister Avenue at San Antonio Road, indicating "Coroner's Bureau," and another at the driveway entrance to the office.

**Finding 2**

Staff time is not used efficiently while autopsies are performed at Cottage Hospital and there is a possibility of worker's compensation issues due to the current system of transporting corpses from the Coroner's Bureau.

**Recommendation 2**

All autopsies should be performed at the Coroner's Bureau.

**Finding 3**

The toxicology laboratory is only able to run a limited range of tests.

**Recommendation 3**

All laboratory testing can be outsourced to a contracted facility at a savings to the county.

**Affected Agencies****Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department**

Findings 1, 2, 3

Recommendations 1, 2, 3

### **Figueroa St. Court Holding Facility**

The Santa Barbara County Courts Holding Facility, located within the Superior Court building on Figueroa Street, consists of both a secure outdoor area and inside holding cells for prisoners transported to and from the facility on court business.

The outside area, for loading and unloading of prisoners, is secure. Locking gates close in front of and behind any vehicle transporting prisoners. Control of the gates is from inside the facility and is inaccessible from the outside. This outdoor area is also monitored by closed circuit cameras from inside the facility. When this outdoor area is "locked down," access to the parking lot behind the court building is impassable, although there is alternative access to the lot.

Prisoners are escorted to one of eight holding cells. Their arrivals are planned in advance in accordance with their scheduled court appearances. For the prisoners' own safety, they are assigned to cells based on their personality profile, capacity to get along with others, nature of the crimes committed, and mental state. If they are in protective custody, they are assigned to a separate cell.

The holding facility can hold a maximum of 80 prisoners. On the day of this year's Grand Jury tour, there were approximately 20 prisoners in five to six of the cells. The facility was clean and inmates appeared well-cared for. Neither prisoners nor correctional staff appeared under stress. The minimum staff requirement at the facility is three officers. There is no set ratio of prisoners to staff, though at times of high-profile inmates, staff numbers may be increased. Staff is satisfied with the current policy and budget cuts will not affect security.

### **Isla Vista Station**

The Sheriff's Isla Vista Station is located on Pardall Avenue in the heart of Isla Vista. It is staffed by the Isla Vista Foot Patrol and is under the direction of a Lieutenant. It is augmented by security personnel from the Police Department of the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), and members of the Highway Patrol.

Normal coverage is usually six deputies, increasing to as many as twelve on the weekends. From the opening of the school year until Halloween, weekend staffing increases to 25 deputies, including several undercover officers. Due to large crowds on Halloween, 95 officers are in place, together with 15 correctional officers with mobile booking capability, plus 10 representatives from the Highway Patrol. In addition, there are six vehicle checkpoints for alcohol control, five horse-mounted Sheriff's Deputies and six mounted officers from Ventura County for the Halloween weekend.

The Isla Vista Foot Patrol is in the difficult position of enforcing the law and protecting the residents of Isla Vista while maintaining quality relationships within the college community. Isla Vista has a long history of being a party destination for the region. Students and visitors drink to excess, some becoming victims of sexual assault, violence or robbery, and others becoming predators. In all instances that the Jury observed, the deputies were courteous and respectful, but firm, when citing party goers or making arrests. Of concern is the growing violence relating directly to alcohol abuse. Serious injuries and even deaths are occurring more frequently and there are increasing numbers of sexual assaults.

The Foot Patrol is involved in community outreach and programs directed against alcohol abuse. They work with Alcohol Beverage Control to maintain diligent prevention of liquor sale violations within the surrounding community. In conjunction with UCSB and other groups, the Foot Patrol has developed a Parental Notification Program to notify parents of student alcohol violations. The Foot Patrol also recently began a Landlord Notification Program to inform property owners and property management companies when tenants continually defy lease regulations pertaining to loud or unruly parties. Both programs are an attempt to reduce problems of alcohol-related behavior in Isla Vista.

### **Main Jail Facility**

The Santa Barbara County Jail is located off Calle Real between El Sueno and Turnpike Roads in Santa Barbara. The facility houses men and women awaiting arraignment and during trial, and those sentenced to county detention.

Upon arrival, all inmates are given a mental and physical evaluation and provided clothing, food and medical care as needed. At this time the jail has three full-time therapists, three full-time Registered Nurses and one half-time psychiatrist. A medical doctor is available every day for sick call as needed and is on-call 24 hours a day.

Most inmates are housed in communal cell with bunks and a toilet. These cells are adjacent to a "day room" which includes tables and a shower room. Inmates spend most of their free time in this area, reading, drawing and conversing. The law provides that each inmate be given three hours of physical activity in a seven-day period.

Inmates have access to telephones, legal services and visitation with friends and relatives. They have a commissary account that can be supplemented by family members or friends. This account can be used for food or personal items. The money from concession sales is used for inmate education programs. The Main Jail is a non-smoking facility.

The severity of inmate crimes is designated by the color of the jumpsuit they are issued. For example, bright orange and red suits are worn by those committing the most serious crimes. The lighter the color, the lesser the crime.

Great care is taken by the correctional officers to secure the safety and well-being of every inmate. Those inmates who are a danger to themselves or others are isolated in separate, single cells. A status board is maintained and updated daily to identify problem inmates and possible aggressive interaction among various factions within the jail. This practice allows for better management of the inmate population.

Sheriff deputies, correctional officers and staff at the Santa Barbara County Jail should be commended for their dedication and professionalism. They organize and oversee a diverse and potentially dangerous group of inmates in an area characterized by overcrowding and continual movement of prisoners between North and South County. More than 1200 prisoners are released annually because of overcrowded conditions. Overcrowding and the need for a North County jail facility remain major issues and should not be overlooked or go unmentioned. (See **Early Release** report.)

### **Men's Honor Farm**

The Men's Honor Farm is located behind the Main Jail on Calle Real in Santa Barbara. The Honor Farm is a minimum-security environment, with work programs designed to support the operation of the custody facilities and provide inmates with alternative ways to serve their sentences. Placement in the Honor Farm requires a minimum of 30 days of good behavior in other detention facilities and no charges of assault or sex crime violations. The Honor Farm can house up to 245 inmates who have been sentenced or are awaiting trial.

Being assigned to this facility provides incentives for positive inmate behavior. This is a dormitory-like setting, where inmates may use exercise facilities, play pool, or visit the library during their free time. Inmates share group responsibility. Each member is responsible for his own actions as well as the actions of others.

In addition, the incentive programs require inmates to perform work at the Honor Farm and other detention facilities. The Sheriff's Department estimates that these programs save the County over a million dollars annually. They also provide work-related education and experience. Inmates doing work outside the facility are picked up and dropped off by the organization employing them, thus saving taxpayers any transportation cost.

Inmates are encouraged to participate in educational and treatment programs. A multi-purpose training lab with computer stations was observed to be under construction.

### **Santa Ynez and Buellton Stations**

Santa Ynez and Buellton Stations represent two of the four contract facilities within Santa Barbara County, the other two being Goleta and Carpinteria. Contract facilities occur when a city chooses to enter into an agreement for police protection from the County Sheriff's office, rather than maintaining their own police force. The Santa Ynez and Buellton stations cover the entire Santa Ynez Valley.

The Santa Ynez Station, located on Mission Drive in Solvang, provides police services for Solvang, Ballard, Los Olivos, Santa Ynez, and the surrounding unincorporated areas. When needed, police services from the Santa Ynez Station are also provided **at no cost** to the Chumash Reservation and Casino. This is a concern to the Jury, since during the years 2000 through 2003, 11% of all the reports taken in the Santa Ynez Valley occurred at the Chumash Casino.

The Buellton Station, located on Highway 246 in Buellton, provides law enforcement services to that city on a 24-hour basis. The Buellton Station also oversees service to the unincorporated areas of Lompoc through the Lompoc Station, located on Burton-Mesa Road in Lompoc.

The Stations share 29 deputies who rotate among Buellton, Solvang, and Lompoc. The Santa Ynez and Buellton Stations are each run by a Sergeant and Senior Deputy, with a Lieutenant in charge of the full operation at each facility. Deputies assigned to these facilities are trained in conducting crime investigations. In cases of a more serious crime, County Sheriff's Detectives are available and on call.

The Santa Ynez Station has a holding facility. The Buellton Station does not. Suspects held in the facility in Solvang normally remain for no more than four to six hours. After that time, they are either released or transported to Los Alamos, where they are met by a deputy from Santa Maria, and taken to the station there. Whenever prisoners are transported to Santa Maria from Solvang, two deputies are required for the transfer, making them unavailable for patrol or other duties. If suspects are to be incarcerated for any period of time, they are then transported to the Main Jail in Santa Barbara. When serious injury or health problems are present, suspects are transported directly to Santa Barbara, where medical care is available.

The stations visited by the Grand Jury were clean and well-organized. The officers in charge were responsive and anxious to provide complete information regarding their respective operations.

### **Santa Maria Station**

The Santa Maria Sheriff's Station, located off Foster Road is part of the North County Operations Division of the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department. The facility appears to be well maintained and has electronic surveillance throughout. This Station houses patrol operations & law enforcement services for the unincorporated areas surrounding the city of Santa Maria, including Orcutt, Gary, Sisquoc, Tanglewood, and Los Alamos. The station serves as backup to local police departments when needed.

Custody operations and jail operations, including support services, are at this station. It is a 38 bed holding facility where inmates are held for a maximum of 96 hours. Inmates are brought here from Guadalupe, Santa Maria, Buellton, Solvang, Lompoc, Los Alamos and Cuyama. It handles about 32% of total county bookings. Deputies and other support personnel perform the administrative functions of the facility. No meals are prepared for inmates at the facility. Box lunches and TV dinners are purchased from outside vendors.

Inmates are sentenced by the courts to serve time in the Santa Barbara County Main Jail. Unless the court determines an inmate ineligible, he may be assigned to one of two alternative work programs by jail administration. Those inmates who do not qualify for these programs are then transported to the Santa Barbara Main Jail.

The Santa Maria Station serves as a holding facility for inmates awaiting arraignment, (or pre-trial detention) and administers the two alternative work programs, Electronic Monitoring/Work Furlough or Sheriffs Work Alternative Program (SWAP):

- Electronic Monitoring/Work Furlough inmates are those sentenced from 61 days to a year. They may apply for this program as an alternative to jail. Inmates continue their jobs within the community while serving their court imposed sentences at home. Participants are monitored via an electronic ankle bracelet and are restricted to a rigid schedule. Inmates pay a portion of the incarceration cost through a daily fee assessment.
- SWAP is for those inmates who are sentenced from three to sixty days. They continue their jobs within the community and are assigned to one of several work sites throughout the county. Participants may serve their sentences in increments such as on weekends without adversely affecting their full-time jobs. They pay a daily fee to offset the cost of the program.

Trustees (low risk inmates) from the Men's Honor Farm in Santa Barbara are assigned to the Station when there is a need. They perform work-related tasks at the Station. They reside on site and have access to a small kitchen space and prepare their own meals.

A previous Grand Jury report commented on the inadequate women's locker room/restroom facility, which is utilized by 25 female employees. This problem is recognized by the Station, but space and funding continue to be an issue.

### **Women's Honor Farm**

The Women's Honor Farm occupies one wing of the Honor Farm facility located on the grounds of the Santa Barbara Main Jail. The women's wing is not accessible to the male Honor Farm inmates. One deputy is on duty at all times, and cameras provide additional security monitoring.

At the time of the Jury's visit, there were 11 females housed at the Honor Farm; however, the facility can accommodate 39 inmates. The low number of female inmates was due to a recent "capping out," or release, of women inmates. (See **Early Release** report.)

The facility is spacious and clean. The sleeping area is dormitory style with bunk beds spaced several feet apart. Inmates are permitted small decorative touches in their individual spaces. A library, cafeteria with microwave ovens and vending machines, and a lounge with telephones, a TV and VCR are provided. There is a walled outdoor area for exercising, eating, or relaxing. Trees and plants in this area contrast with the stark outdoor areas of the Main Jail.

Contributions to inmates' commissary accounts are made by friends and family. These accounts can be used to purchase snacks and discretionary personal items. Inmates are given hygiene kits weekly to meet minimum cleanliness standards. Visitations for Honor Farm inmates occur in the Main Jail.

Inmates housed at the Honor Farm are required to work either at county public agencies or on site. Transportation is provided to jobs outside the facility. Inmates earn work credit towards a reduced sentence. Inmates are also encouraged to participate in educational and treatment programs.

It is considered a privilege by inmates to be housed at the Honor Farm and most do what they can to earn the right to serve sentences there.

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY INMATE DEATHS**

Each year a Civil Grand Jury is mandated by the State of California to review circumstances surrounding all deaths that occur during incarceration in any of the County detention facilities. In accordance with Penal Code requirements, the 2003-2004 Jury investigated all deaths occurring during its term. The Jury reviewed two cases, both occurring while the detainees were incarcerated in the Main Jail. The Jury looked at the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department Major Crimes Reports, the Coroner's Reports, the Autopsy Reports in both cases, and the Santa Barbara County Jail Medical Department's Policy and Procedure Manual.

After reviewing the above documentation related to both cases, the Jury concluded that the deaths were due to natural causes and no further investigation was necessary. The Jury found the jail staff, the Coroner's Bureau, and the Sheriff to be cooperative in furnishing relevant materials and information for the Jury's review.