

July 17, 2007

Honorable Judge Rodney S. Melville  
Superior Court, Santa Maria Division  
312-M East Cook Street  
Santa Maria, California 93455-5165

**Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2006-07 Civil Grand Jury Report on:**  
*"Los Prietos Boys Camp/Academy, An Oasis of Hope."*

Dear Judge Melville:

During its regular meeting of Tuesday, July 17, 2006, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following responses as its response to the 2006-07 Grand Jury's report on "Los Prietos Boys Camp/Academy, An Oasis of Hope".

The Board of Supervisors thanks the Grand Jury for its findings and recommendations on this important matter.

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**Finding 1**

*Opportunities exist to expand the use of remote monitoring.*

**Response:** The Board Agrees with the finding.

**Recommendation 1**

*Add cameras to monitor additional areas of the facility. Consideration might be given to converting the current camera system to a secure web/internet based monitoring approach.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response:

Adding remote monitoring of the wood cutting area would enhance security coverage. In addition, other locations potentially needing enhanced security coverage have also been identified. The Communications Division of the County's General Services Department will evaluate the current security monitoring equipment at the Los Prietos Boys Camp/Boys Academy within 90 days to make

appropriate recommendations for improved technology and equipment. Probation Facility Administration will analyze and prioritize recommended upgrades and those sustainable within the Probation Department's FY 07-08 budget will be implemented by priority.

**Finding 2**

*Not all staff are familiar with the operation of the bus.*

**Response:** The Board Agrees with the finding.

**Recommendation 2:**

*Provide orientation to staff on operation of the bus.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response:

The recommendation has been implemented by the Probation Department. The Department has completed training with staff on the general operation of the emergency evacuation bus. Additional bus keys have also been secured in each of the dorms to ensure a quick response from all areas of the facility. A weekly check for fuel and start up of the bus has also been implemented. These procedures have been added to the emergency evacuation manual.

**Finding 3**

*While some designated financial donations are made with specific guidelines, overall no formal process or criteria exist for awarding scholarship funds.*

**Response:** The Board Disagrees with the finding. The Probation Department has a formal policy on the award of scholarships that was implemented in 2006.

**Recommendation 3**

*Institute a formal review process based on minimum eligibility standards of all scholarships. Additional criteria can be added for special scholarships and grants.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response:

The recommendation has been implemented by the Probation Department. A formal process is in place for awarding scholarship funds. The process was implemented when the scholarship program started in 2006.

Each applicant is required to submit a two-to-five-page essay describing goals, plans on achieving these goals, and specifically how the scholarship will aid in reaching their specified goals. The applicant must be in good standing in the Los Prietos program and if already a graduate of Camp, in good standing on probation.

The applicant must be a high school graduate, a student within 30 units of high school graduation, or have an endorsement from a sponsoring teacher indicating that he would benefit from college or vocational training. Non-graduates must have a detailed plan, which includes how a High School diploma or G.E.D. will be achieved. The scholarship funds must be accessed within one year of acceptance for the awardees' college, trade school, or vocational education.

Probation personnel, including Camp officers and designated volunteers, maintain direct oversight and accountings of spending.

**Finding 4**

*Vocational training opportunities are limited*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response: Agree

**Recommendation 4**

*Develop a wider range of vocational training programs. Consideration might be given to forming partnerships with outside organizations.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The Probation Department has received a \$51,000 grant to fund a vocational instructor by a private foundation in June 2007 for a collaborative Vocational Technology Program at Camp that will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for approval in July. The target date for program implementation is not expected to exceed 90 days. This program will teach marketable employment skills to campers at both Los Prietos Boys Camp and Los Prietos Boys Academy. The Board, through the County Executive Office, will continue to work with the Probation Department to increase appropriate vocational training programs.

**Finding 5**

*No formal mentoring program presently exists.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response: Agree.

**Recommendation 5**

*Create a formal, on-going mentoring program, which actively engages past graduates in support of Los Prietos mission.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the near future. Contract funds have recently been evaluated and approximately \$12,000 has been reallocated by the Probation Department to hire a part time coordinator/provider of mentor services. A mentoring program that will connect Camp graduates with approved Probation Department volunteers is currently being developed and is expected to be implemented by September 1, 2007. The goal is to seek and approve mature, responsible, and law abiding adults in the community to serve as volunteer mentors for boys who graduate and return to their respective communities. The opportunity to hire a coordinator of volunteer/mentor services will greatly enhance the viability of these services to the Camp population.

The first phase of a newly implemented Bridges to Recovery (BTR) alcohol and drug treatment program was recently completed by the Probation Department. A key component of BTR is for Camp graduates who successfully complete BTR to become mentors for those campers who come after them in BTR. This mentoring component has further value in that graduates are staying in touch with one another other in the community in an effort to remain clean, sober and law abiding.

Peer mentoring will be further supported in Camp group sessions and ultimately in aftercare group meetings in the community.

The Vocational Technology Program will provide another mentoring opportunity as Camp graduates find successful employment and return to Camp in a mentor capacity to motivate and encourage campers to complete their program. The Vocational Technology Instructor and the volunteer/mentor services coordinator will work collaboratively to target success stories for speaking engagements and presentations at the Camp.

**Finding 6**

*The facility is not operating at its functional capacity*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response: Partially Disagree. The operation of the Camp's 75 beds for which the Probation Department is funded to staff, is adequate to effectively manage the current court-ordered juvenile population.

**Recommendation 6**

*Efforts should be made to secure the funding and staffing required to maintain the camp at peak occupancy.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response:

The recommendation will not be implemented at this time because it is not warranted. When Ventura County Probation Department opened their new juvenile hall and commitment facility in 2004, commitments to the Camp from that county discontinued by an annual average of approximately 20 beds. As cited above, the current staffed capacity of Los Prietos Boys Camp/Boys Academy is adequate for the numbers of wards being court ordered into the programs by Santa Barbara County Juvenile Courts. Should commitment numbers significantly increase in the future, expanding the staffed capacity of the Camp will be considered for recommendation in the annual budgetary process.

**Finding 7**

*Funds presently dedicated to the swimming pool project are inadequate. Furthermore, no plan has been established to bring the project to fruition.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response: Agree.

The Board has included the swimming pool project in the County's Capital Improvement Plan.

**Recommendations 7**

*Establish a plan to complete the swimming pool project.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is no longer reasonable.

Having a swimming pool installed at Camp would be recreational, therapeutic and offer relief from the summer heat. However, there are overriding concerns relative to project cost, ongoing fiscal liability and program liability that are outlined below:

Additional training for camp personnel would be required, i.e. certified licensed water safety training. Safety and security concerns are inherent with swimming pools and according to the Corrections Standard Authority, swimming pools are not included in new construction projects due to cost and liability concerns. The cost in time and supplies to maintain the pool outweighs the amount of time that the pool would be used during the year.

Adding another recreational program to our existing daily/weekly schedule would be challenging. Recently, we spent considerable time reviewing and evaluating our current daily program schedule. Our existing program schedule has quality, value and balance. Adding a swimming program would require the elimination of one of our existing programs.

The only location approved for the installation of the pool is set between the school and the Los Prietos Boys Camp dorm and is subject to a considerable grade that will add significant design and construction expenses to the project. Installation in this location and the requisite fencing would obstruct security views and noise from the pool area would diminish the ability to use school classrooms for programming while the pool was in use.

**Finding 8**

*There are no formal annual needs assessment and criteria for allocating discretionary funds.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response: Agree.

**Recommendation 8**

*Conduct a formal annual needs assessment to identify appropriate projects for discretionary funding. Consideration might be given to establishing a citizen oversight panel.*

**Response:** The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented by the Probation Department, but will be implemented within 180 days. The County Executive Office will work with and provide assistance as needed to the Department to implement their plan. As part of the implementation plan, the Probation Department is developing a staff survey instrument to be used in the Institutions Division in order to solicit regular feedback and suggestions regarding operational issues and programming alternatives, including the appropriate allocation of discretionary and scholarship funds. This survey will be conducted on a semi-annual basis and is tentatively scheduled for distribution in July and January. In addition to the semi-annual survey, staff will have ready access to the Facility Operation/Procedure/Program Form that is pending development and can ultimately be submitted at any time for administrative review, consideration, and implementation.

Sincerely,

Brooks Firestone, Chair  
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

Attachments:

Grand Jury Report entitled "Los Prietos Boys Camp/Academy, An Oasis of Hope".

cc: Grand Jury Foreperson  
Patricia Stewart, Chief Probation Officer.