

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT RESPONSE
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY'S 2006-2007 REPORT
"SELECTED COMMUNITY CHALLENGES"

Finding 1: *Greater use of medium security detention facilities, staffed by law enforcement and clinical experts, could reduce jail overcrowding and provide more humane treatment for some segments of the inmate population.*

Response to Finding 1: The Sheriff's Department agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 1: *Develop more medium security detention facilities as alternatives to incarceration in the Main Jail.*

Response to Recommendation 1: The Sheriff's Department is currently developing plans for such facilities; however, further cost and benefit analysis must be performed and funding for construction and staffing must be identified to determine whether the recommendation should be implemented and in what timeframe. The Sheriff's Department will provide an update in six months.

Finding 2: *Allegations of negligent or improper treatment of inmates in the Main Jail could not be verified but such claims were not isolated.*

Response to Finding 2: The Sheriff's Department partially agrees. Complaints occur but most are not sustained. The Sheriff's Department has many safeguards, investigative protocols to ensure that allegations of improper treatment are identified and investigated. Other members of the justice system, such as attorneys and court officials are a resource to report and identify complaints of improper treatment. Audits are conducted on a regular basis by outside organizations such as the State of California Corrections Standards Authority, Institute for Medial Quality and Santa Barbara County Public Health and the jail has received passing ratings.

Recommendation 2: *Authorize and fund a court appointed ombudsman who is beholden neither to detain authorities nor inmate advocacy groups and who is devoted to evaluation and reporting on complaints.*

Response to Recommendation 2: The recommendation will not be implemented. The Sheriff's Department disagrees with this recommendation. The county should not bear the cost of this position as there are many existing avenues and remedies to identify and resolve grievances. Complaints by inmates are actively identified and investigated by many means. There are other greater inmate needs such as additional drug alcohol counselors or a special needs inmate discharge planner that should be funded prior to an ombudsman.

Finding 3: *The influence of gang activity in the detention system is pernicious, and its impact on the growth of neighborhood gangs may increase if not checked.*

Response to Finding 3: The Sheriff's Department agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 3: *Implement a sustainable education program on the negative impact of gang activity, involving law enforcement and the education experts, focusing on children in K-8 and including outreach to parents.*

Response to Recommendation 3: The recommendation has been implemented. The Sheriff's Department agrees with this recommendation. Through Life Skills training and future DARE training, in collaboration with elementary and middle schools, we continue to bring the anti gang message to K-8 students. A more recent program offers parents of children within these age brackets valuable parenting lessons in a program entitled "Parent Academy". One component of the "Parent Academy" focuses specifically on gang life and behavior.

The entire response to the gang issues in Santa Barbara County combine collective energies from within the criminal justice system and focus on 'Prevention, Intervention, Training, Enforcement and Prosecution.'

Finding 4: *The California Civil Code (1714.1 & 1714.3) prescribes the liability of parents or guardians for the misconduct of children within their custody and control.*

Response to Finding 4: The response for this finding will be presented by the District Attorney's Office.

Finding 5: *There is growing disregard for traffic laws and this can contribute to disregard for the law in general.*

Response to Finding 5: The Sheriff's Department disagrees partially with the finding.

Recommendation 5: *Place greater emphasis on enforcement and implement a public awareness program regarding the bad habits of drivers and bicyclists.*

Response to Recommendation 5: The recommendation has been implemented. Within the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County, patrolled by the office of the California Highway Patrol, traffic accidents have shown a dramatic decrease over the past two years. Simultaneously, incorporated cities that contract their law enforcement services with the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department, have shown even greater reductions. This data reflects on motorists who are, generally, paying more attention to the rules of the road. Additionally, numerous education programs followed by aggressive enforcement posture have had a positive impact on local drivers. Programs such as Avoid the Twelve, which incorporates every law enforcement organization in Santa Barbara County and Click It or Ticket, a program designed to insure compliance to seat belt laws, have reinforced attention of drivers towards following traffic laws.