

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DETENTION FACILITIES REPORT

Under *California Penal Code Section 919(b)*, county grand juries... “shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county”. This report contains results of inspections of the jails, detention facilities, and coroner facilities, by the 2012-2013 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury (Jury). These facilities include the following categories:

Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Office:

- Coroner’s Bureau
- Isla Vista Foot Patrol Station
- Lompoc Court Holding Facility, Cypress Avenue
- New Cuyama Station
- Santa Barbara Court Holding Facility, Figueroa Street
- Santa Barbara Main Jail
- Santa Maria Court Services Holding Facility, Cook Street
- Santa Maria Station
- Santa Ynez Valley Station

Santa Barbara County Probation Department:

- La Posada Juvenile Hall, Santa Barbara
- Los Prietos Boys Camp
- Susan J. Gionfriddo Juvenile Justice Center, Santa Maria

Municipal Police Departments:

- Lompoc Police Department
- Santa Barbara Police Department
- Santa Maria Police Department

METHODOLOGY

The Jury visited each of these facilities one or more times. Deputies and staff members who were on duty were interviewed.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Coroner’s Bureau

In 1987 the Board of Supervisors identified an “emergency need” to build a Coroner’s Bureau. The facility was built by County inmate labor in 1988. Other than a new emergency generator, there has been no significant upgrade to the main building since that time. The four Coroner’s Bureau detectives have a caseload of 1,200-1,500 per year, the largest in the Sheriff’s Office, resulting in approximately 150 autopsies performed annually. Interviews with staff members revealed they work well together despite an environment with antiquated equipment and a poorly functioning ventilation system posing a risk for exposure to airborne pathogens. The Jury finds the Coroner’s Bureau understaffed and in need of an upgrade.

Isla Vista Foot Patrol Station

This station is a relatively new facility; it is well kept and strategically located in the community. It serves as a holding facility, with transportation to Santa Barbara County Jail as needed. There are 20 Sheriff's Office staff members assigned to the Station, including two deputies on bike patrol. California Highway Patrol Officers and University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) Campus Police collaborate there on a daily basis.

Friday and Saturday nights, the Isla Vista community can be responsible for as much as 50% of all Sheriff's case numbers reported in the County and 25% of all reported cases in a year. One of the busiest times for the Station is the weekend after midterms.

The Jury finds the Sheriff's Office and their staff to be professional and patient in doing a difficult job.

Lompoc Court Holding Facility, Cypress Street

This facility is usually staffed with two to four deputies. Five holding cells have a toilet and sink, and can hold up to five inmates in each cell. Three isolation cells are available for dangerous inmates. Inmates are separated by gender and classification. Juveniles are held by the Probation Department in a different area. All inmates are provided food and drinks if needed.

Inmates are transported in and out of this facility, sometimes twice per day, to await their court appearances. The existing bus port creates a potentially unsafe environment for employees and the general public. The Jury finds this is unacceptable.

New Cuyama Station

This station, which serves the largest geographic area in the County, is staffed with two deputies who are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. One officer is a resident deputy. Although few arrests are made each month, the deputies respond to the same issues that the other Sheriff's Office Deputies respond to throughout the County.

There is one holding cell with a toilet.

The Jury learned that the Sheriff's Office is working with the County Fire Department to enhance their local communication system.

The Jury finds this facility to be very clean and well managed.

Santa Barbara Court Holding Facility, Figueroa Street

This facility has eight holding cells. During the day, while awaiting their court appearances, inmates are separated by gender and classification. The cells are monitored by camera and equipped with a toilet and sink. In addition, there are four isolation cells for dangerous inmates. Food and drinks are provided if needed.

In 2012, 45 percent of the time, the facility exceeded its capacity of 60 inmates for which it was designed.

Some inmates are escorted by deputies to cross the street from the holding facility to the courtrooms in full view of the general public. The Jury finds that this facility is inadequate and the location presents a potential public safety hazard.

Santa Barbara Main Jail (County Jail)

The Jury visited the Main Jail on several occasions and found it severely overcrowded and understaffed. Sections of the facility, built in 1961, are outmoded.

Prior to the enactment of AB109¹ in October 2011, the average length of incarceration was 20 days. Now the jail will retain inmates with sentences in excess of one year. The staff is faced with the need to provide services for these longer term inmates. These additional challenges relate to providing adequate living space, extensive medical services, expanded exercise yards, educational programs and dietary requirements.

The Jury learned that the “Sheriff’s Treatment Program²” is designed to provide support services to inmates prior to being released. These services include individual and group counseling, addiction control and educational opportunities.

After several interviews with staff, the Jury learned the Main Jail is inadequate to currently handle the challenges of AB109 inmates.

Santa Maria Court Services Holding Facility, Cook Street

This facility is located in the basement of the Santa Maria Court Building. It has 17 cells and is capable of holding 110 inmates while they wait for their court appearances during the day. Deputies isolate inmates who are considered dangerous to themselves or others. Since this is a holding facility only, meals are brought in as necessary and medical care is provided by a local hospital.

The Jury finds that the lack of cameras on the cell level makes this facility unsafe.

Santa Maria Station

Prior to 2012, this facility was used as an additional jail facility, supplementing the Main Jail. Due to staffing constraints, it is currently used as a holding facility. At this time, it is open nightly from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Arrestees are booked there and transported to the Main Jail, Santa Maria Court, or released each morning.

The facility contains eight cells, capable of holding up to 36 arrestees. Each cell has a toilet and sink. The Jury finds this facility clean and efficiently managed.

The Jury recommends that the Sheriff extend the hours of this jail facility to remain open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

¹ Public Safety Realignment Act (AB109) transfers responsibility for supervising certain kinds of felony offenders and state prison parolees from state prison and state parole agents to county jails and probation officers

² As described in the 2011 Annual Report by the Sheriff’s Office of Santa Barbara County

Santa Ynez Valley Station

This station has one holding cell and is used until the person in custody can be transported to the Main Jail. When in use, the cell can be continuously observed through a window. Juveniles are held in a separate room with supervision. The Jury finds this station clean and well managed.

La Posada Juvenile Hall, Santa Barbara³

Currently this facility is used as a receiving and booking station as well as a courtroom. There are seven staff members and a director. Following booking, all detainees are transported for detention to the Susan J. Gionfriddo Juvenile Justice Center in Santa Maria and returned to La Posada for court appearances.

The Jury finds the staff to be professional and experienced with sensitivity to the age of the youth.

Los Prietos Boys Camp³

During the Jury's visit in September 2012, 78 boys were at the camp which has a capacity of 96. The Jury found the camp to be in an attractive setting in the Los Padres National Forest. The 30 dedicated staff members care about the welfare of the boys. They work three shifts covering 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The boys are separated by age into two groups. The average length of stay is 5½ months and some may be referred back to repeat the program. Their educational needs are met by the Santa Barbara County Education Office which employs three teachers at the camp.

The Jury had lunch with the boys and found the food adequate. The Jury commends the work furlough program and the fact the boys wrote and self-published a book of poetry. The camp was clean, well organized and maintained.

Susan J. Gionfriddo Juvenile Justice Center, Santa Maria³

This is a 24-hour maximum security facility for youthful offenders, both male and female, ranging from 12 to 18 years of age. The facility has six units with a total capacity of 140. At the time of the Jury's visit, there were 94 minors in custody with an average age of 16 years, with an average stay of 30 days. Medical services are available seven days per week. Mental health services are provided as needed. The facility has an extensive surveillance system that is controlled centrally by a deputy who also controls the movement at each doorway.

The Jury inspected some units, had lunch with the inmates and visited a classroom with teachers provided by the Santa Barbara County Education Office. The Jury finds this facility clean and efficient.

Lompoc Police Department

This facility operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week with a capacity of 23 and an average of seven detainees at a time. The maximum stay is 96 hours with an average stay of 48 hours. Three meals are provided per day. Males, females and juveniles are held separately.

³In 2012, the Santa Barbara County Juvenile Probation Department processed 526 juveniles, 70% from the North County and 30% from the South County.

Staff advised the Jury that there have not been any major incidents in custody in over a decade.

The facility is old, but the Department appears to have adopted security features that have contributed to the safety record of the jail. The Jury finds the facility clean and adequately staffed.

Santa Barbara Police Department

The Santa Barbara Police headquarters building has two holding cells, monitored by camera. Arrestees are booked in this facility and then transported to the Main Jail. These cells are also used to allow those arrested on public drunkenness charges to sober up prior to being released.

Santa Maria Police Department

The Santa Maria Police headquarters building has one small (approximately 4' by 4') cell with no toilet, sink or space to lie down. After booking, arrestees are transported either to the Main Jail, or if booked after 7 p.m., to the Santa Maria Sheriff's Station.

CONCLUSION

The 2012-2013 Santa Barbara Grand Jury wishes to express its appreciation to the law enforcement officers and support personnel for their service within Santa Barbara County. The Jury finds that Santa Barbara county law enforcement and detention facilities are staffed with professional and dedicated personnel.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lompoc Court Holding Facility, Cypress Avenue

Finding 1

That the existing bus port creates a potential safety hazard for court officials and employees, as well as the public, because in the process of loading and unloading, the detainees can visually observe the vehicles in the parking lot.

Recommendation 1

That the existing bus port be modified so that detainees cannot visually observe the parking lot.

Santa Barbara Court Holding Facility, Figueroa Street

Finding 2a

That the holding cells in the basement of the Santa Barbara Court Holding Facility, Figueroa Street, do not have enough cells to house the detainees whose cases are before the courts that day.

Finding 2b

That the detainees are handcuffed to railings in the corridors due to the lack of holding cell space.

Finding 2c

That this overcrowding creates a dangerous environment for both deputies and detainees.

Finding 2d

That shackled detainees have to be escorted across Figueroa Street to courtrooms by deputies in full view of the passing public. Such a procession is a potential security and safety hazard.

Recommendation 2

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff support all efforts to address these potential hazardous situations.

Santa Maria Court Services Holding Facility, Cook Street**Finding 3**

That the holding cell level lacks cameras.

Recommendation 3

That the Sheriff fund and install cameras to be placed on the cell level, for the safety of all detainees and deputies.

Santa Maria Station**Finding 4**

That the facility is currently open only from 7 p.m. until 7 a.m. daily.

Recommendation 4a

That the Sheriff fund this location to be open and operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Recommendation 4b

That the Sheriff hire and staff this location to allow it to stay open and be operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

In accordance with *California Penal Code Section 933.05*, each agency and government body affected by or named in this report is requested to respond in writing to the findings and recommendations in a timely manner. The following are the affected agencies for this report, with the mandated response period for each:

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors - 90 Days

Findings: 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d

Recommendation: 2

Santa Barbara County Sheriff - 60 Days

Findings: 1, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 3, 4

Recommendations: 1, 2, 3, 4a, 4b