



SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Adam Christianson, Sheriff-Coroner

**ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION**

June 21, 2013

The Honorable Loretta Murphy Begen, Presiding Judge
Stanislaus County Superior Court
P.O. Box 3488
Modesto, Ca 95353

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report 13-14GJ

Dear Judge Begen;

The Sheriff's Department is in receipt of the Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury's completed "Case # 13-14GJ Stanislaus County Jail Facilities Inspection" report, dated June 17, 2013.

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933(c) and 933.05 (f), the following is our response as it pertains to the Sheriff's Department Detention Facilities:

The Civil Grand Jury included narrative sections in the report; wherein it describes in general terms each of the three detention facilities. The report further addressed recent challenges posed to the Sheriff's Department as the result of the implementation of AB-109 (Public Safety Realignment) on October 1, 2011 and local involvement in jail expansion projects under AB-900. Essentially, the detention facilities are housing higher security risk and more criminally sophisticated inmates for longer periods of time in detention facilities not originally designed for that purpose. The county is in the final architectural Design Phase of the AB 900 jail expansion project at the site of the Public Safety Center, which includes the addition of 384 maximum-security inmate beds and 72 medical/mental health inmate beds to better accommodate the ever-changing inmate population dynamics associated with "Prison Realignment."

Findings (Overall):

- F1. The Stanislaus County Jail facilities are housing an increased number of higher risk institutionalized inmates, a larger percentage of mental health inmates, and a larger percentage of medical needs inmates. These inmates are being held for longer periods of time, in jail facilities not originally designed and built for that purpose. In addition, the jail facilities will be forced to upgrade the current facilities, as a requirement of AB 109 funding, to include educational, general health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and anti-recidivism programs.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.



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- F2. Each jail facility passed all State/County independently required inspections and is operating at or above the state mandated performance levels.

The Stanislaus County Jail Facilities are operating at a performance level that meets and/or exceeds state correctional standards. The Stanislaus County Jail facilities, taking into consideration their age and the intent of their original design, were clean, well maintained and well managed.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

- F3. The total inmate population capacity, for all jail facilities combined, is 1208. The overall average ratio of inmate to custodial/supervisory staff is 86 to 1. This average is based on a number of factors and is adjusted based on individual security levels and housing area requirements.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding, with the clarification that the ratio applies specifically to the inmate living areas and not other ancillary security posts.

- F4. Sheriff's Department custodial staff is currently moving approximately 300 inmates, combined, to and from court, per week, from the three jail facilities.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding, noting that these numbers are escalating exponentially as more AB 109 inmates enter the system.

- F5. The Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department currently has approximately 30 custodial staff and 4 custodial sergeant position vacancies.

The Sheriff's Department recruitment process has been unable to substantially reduce the number of vacant positions. Regardless of the number of applications received, the Sheriff's Department is currently experiencing a 1% success rate among Sheriff Department applicants. That translates to 1 out of every 100 applicants being capable of successfully passing the hiring and training process before a vacant position can be filled.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding at the point of the inspection. Since the Grand Jury visit, the department instituted continuous testing for Custodial Deputy candidates and reduced the vacancies from the stated 30 to 24. We also facilitated a Custodial Sergeant's promotional examination and filled all the sergeant's vacancies.

Recommendations (Overall)

- R1. Ensure Stanislaus County is adequately prepared to address the burdening effect on Stanislaus County communities as a result of the placement of state penitentiary inmates into already over-crowded jail facilities.

Response: The respondent agrees with the recommendation. The Sheriff's Department has addressed some of these concerns in the following ways:

1. State funding allocated under AB 109 has been utilized to add additional custodial staff and 128 inmate housing beds lost when the department suffered a reduction in force due to previous economic challenges facing the county.
2. The department has expanded community based work crews and added staffing to the Jail Alternatives Unit to provide increased supervision for those participants released early from custody due to lack of available bed capacity.
3. The department has implanted a Sheriff's Custody Institute of Life Skills (SCILS) pilot program for inmates to develop and address cognitive skills, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health issues, education and spiritual needs of the population. This program will evolve and grow in the future.
4. In September, the department will activate a new, 192-bed facility on the grounds of the Public Safety Center, which will both increase our jail capacity and afford us the opportunity to close the outdated Honor Farm.
5. The department is in the final architectural design phase to add 384 maximum-security inmate beds, 72 medical/mental health beds and a Day Reporting Center on the grounds of the PSC. These facilities are scheduled for activation by mid-2016.

Recommendations (Specific to Facilities)

Public Safety Center:

- R3. Upgrade the electronics system in the Control Center.

Response: The respondent agrees with the recommendation. It is our intent to upgrade the electronics system in the Control Center as part of the jail expansion project under AB 900.

- R4. Add video surveillance to the food preparation area, the loading dock area and Minimum Security Visitation area as a way to increase security, deter theft and the passing of Contraband.

Response: The respondent agrees with the recommendation. We will assess additional surveillance in the cited locations as part of the AB 900 project or as a separate project within our budget allocation.

Honor Farm:

- R5. Adhere as closely as possible to the proposed June 2013 closure date.

Response: The respondent agrees with the recommendation. The department moved the closure date out to August 1, 2013 to sustain existing inmate bed capacity for as long as possible and close to the activation date for the new 192-bed facility in mid-September, when the Honor Farm will officially close.

Men's Jail:

- R6. Accelerate any proposed renovations or planned new construction for a combined downtown jail/courthouse facility.

Response: The respondent defers on this recommendation. The planning and development of a new courthouse facility with adequate inmate holding capacity is completely within the purview of the state Administrative Office of the Courts. The Sheriff's Department, County Executive Officer's staff and the Court Administrative staff will work in concert to ensure we, as a group, have input; but the final determinations will be with state officials.

Sincerely,



ADAM CHRISTIANSON
Sheriff-Coroner
Stanislaus County

cc: Supervisor Vito Chiesa, Chairman
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors

Richard W. Jacobs, Foreperson
Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury 2012-2013

Monica Nino, Chief Executive Officer
Stanislaus County